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ABSTRACT

This manual for educators and administrators explores current educational research on self-concept and self-esteem, relates this research to migrant education, and offers a rationale for and examples of activities, techniques, and philosophies to enhance self-perception. Emphasis is placed on understanding of socioeconomic causes of migrant problems and correct attitudes toward self-perception enhancement. Problems which undermine self-perception in migrant students are detailed, including teachers' "Missionary Mentality," fallacies of offering equal educational opportunity to all, the "culture of poverty" theory, and language differences. Guidelines for educators of migrant students include remembering the social and cultural genesis of student problems and not blaming the victim, helping migrant families agitate for social reform and compensatory help, studying ways to transform schools to adapt to the students' needs as well as helping students adapt to school. Suggestions are offered for curricula which provide information about the migrant way of life, civil rights, and publications/organizations for migrants, and which teach ways for migrants to solve social and economic problems through their own efforts. Examples of student decision-making models and integration of families into school activities are offered. Teaching techniques to enhance self-perception are described and two lesson samples are included. Source materials are listed throughout the text and in the bibliography. (LFL)

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Enhancing Self-Concept and Self-Esteem: Program Planning and Teaching Techniques for Educators of Migrant Students.

John Studstill

RC015630

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ENHANCING SELF-CONCEPT AND SELF-ESTEEM:
Program Planning and Teaching Techniques for Educators of Migrant Students

John Studstill

1985

This Curriculum/Training Module was produced under contract with the Georgia State Department of Education as Fiscal Agent of a Migrant Education, Section 143 Interstate and Intrastate Cooperation and Coordination Project. Cooperating states are: Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Washington.

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The director and staff of the Center who encouraged this project are John D. Hutcheson, Director, Robert E. Snow, Research Associate, and C. T. Cummings, Research Associate; Mollie Raby and Vanessa Menendez did the typing.

I would like to especially recognize the inspiration of Robert Coles who has done as much as anyone to enlighten us about the self-perceptions of migrant children, of Caesar Chavez, who has given pride and determination in the struggle for empowerment, and of Gloria Mattera who made me proud to be a part of migrant education because of her dedication to the needs of migrant children. All of us who have worked or continue to work to make the educational, political and economic systems more responsive to the needs of migrant children and to make all U.S. citizens more sensitive to the exploitation of this particular category of workers, would do well to imitate the examples of these three.

Finally, I wish to recognize, and dedicate this book to, the millions of migrant workers who have died unnecessarily, before their time, from pesticides, malnutrition, unsanitary conditions, brutality and disease - and no doubt from despair; to those who have struggled to the last against conditions which are obscene in the most richly endowed nation on earth today; to those people whose lives are measured by mortality rates and life-spans equivalent to the poorest nations of the Third World; to the Third World within U.S.-America.

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I. INTRODUCTION

> If the past decade has taught us anything, it is that educational reform confined only to the schools and not [extended] to the society at large is doomed to eventual triviality (Bruner 1973:463).

The enhancement of self-concept and self-esteem among migrant students is a goal strongly endorsed by migrant educators. This is clear from surveys conducted under Georgia's 143 project in Staff Development. In two separate needs assessments, one conducted among educators of migrant students in six Southeastern states and a second among similar professionals in three Northwestern states, self-concept concerns ranked third on lists of educational needs and as areas in which staff development activities should concentrate (Ockerman 1983:20; 1984:20). On the strength of such concerns, the present manual was undertaken. It's goals are to provide materials that can be used by migrant educators to bring themselves up to date on current work and thinking in the general field of self-perception research, to relate some of these ideas to the specialized area of migrant education, to offer some suggestions for planning curricula sensitive to self-perception enhancement, and to provide examples of teaching techniques for creating more positive self-perceptions. The manual is designed to be of use to teachers, administrators and trainers.

It is likely that many migrant educators are concerned with their student's self-perceptions because these educators, first, see migrant children as deprived in numerous ways, and, second, believe their relatively high attrition rates and low achievement may be due in part to low self-esteem and negative or poorly developed self-concepts. Other educators may simply believe that enhancement of self-perception should be a

major goal of all good education. It is thus of interest to try and determine whether or not self-perception is of special relevance in migrant education, and, for that matter (given the prevalence of educational fads), to determine to what extent it is a subject which should be of concern to all educators. The manual begins, therefore, with an overview of the field of self-perception in educational research. From this foundation we will move to a consideration of migrant education in particular, and then to suggestions for curriculum planners and teachers.

It should be noted at the outset that self-perception among migrant students is a subject which has not been extensively researched or written about, at least not in readily accessible published locations such as ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center). As a result, this manual reports not so much on research in migrant education as on research that should be relevant to migrant education. It is hoped that this effort will be of value in planning in-service training for migrant personnel and that it will provide suggestions and resources for developing greater sensitivity to, and more adequate curricula in, programs for migrants.

Certain assumptions and values have guided the writing of this manual and should be made as clear as possible. First, it was assumed that self-perceptions are probably an important influence on learning. Hard facts substantiating this assumption are not as easy to come by as one might think. As will become apparent, however, there is enough evidence to validate the goals of this manual, that is, to provide insight into the nature of self-perception and reasonable suggestions about planning and teaching. A second assumption was that the schools need to pay more attention to developing clear and positive self-perceptions as a means of not only

improving school performance but also of enhancing the general quality and enjoyment of student life. The author tends to believe that positive self-esteem and clear self-concepts enhance one's life in general and probably contribute to higher performance and success in achieving goals. It is apparent, however, that even improved "achievement of goals" is not an adequate guide for action in education. We must also ask ourselves, what goals are worthy of achievement.

A third general assumption relates to the importance of the social group. Helping a young man or woman achieve the goal of emotional highs through more efficient purchase and use of drugs is not our goal; nor is helping a few people become millionaires at the expense of thousands unable to obtain the basic necessities of life. Our overall goals should be the creation of a society in which all can maintain healthy diets and living conditions, as well as roughly equal educational opportunities and achievements, a society in which cooperation and mutual aid have the edge over competition and the drive for being "out-standing" individuals (in the sense that one must "stand out" above the rest). One must not measure success by the failure of others. These are the kinds of overall values which this writer believes should be enhanced, and values cannot be separated from the schools' attempts to enhance self-concept and self-esteem. It should not be our goal to try to enhance self-perceptions or to make students "feel good about themselves" irrespective of the characteristics of those selves. For that matter, too much emphasis on the individual or isolated self may enhance egocentrism of a socially negative sort. A main area of concern in self-concept study should thus be the avoidance of overemphasis on the individual and the purely psychological

life. We all live in social groups and the enhancement of individual lives is inseparable from the enhancement of the well-being of groups and of social life.

Finally, the value placed by the author on racial, sexual and class equality no doubt has colored the emphases of this manual. There has been some effort made to point out how racial, sexual and class discrimination may form some of the basis for maintaining poverty, destroying well-being, and damaging the self-esteem of many citizens.

To expect teachers and the schools alone to be able to offset the damage to self-esteem and self-concept which such social problems generate is to be naive. However, to expect them to try to avoid perpetuating and adding to these problems, to educate themselves to combat the results of these problems, is not expecting too much. This is one of the admirable and continuing struggles in which educators should and do engage.

Beane and Lipka (1984) share most of the values and assumptions highlighted above. This is apparent in their attempt to paint a picture of a school and curriculum which would be self-enhancing. In fact, they have identified seventeen elements of contrast between what they think the self-enhancing school would look like and what they see as the reality of many U.S. schools today. The following is a summary of several of their most salient contrasts (Beane and Lipka 1984:179-188).

1. From low priority to high priority on self-perceptions

Schools and curricula in the U.S. are only beginning to plan self-consciously for self-perception enhancement. Of course, the best teachers have always recognized the need for affective support, for building self-confidence and a positive attitude towards the self as learner, but these

teachers need more support from school administrators as well as assistance from researchers to determine what works best.

2. From custodial climate to humanistic climate

By this is meant that self-perceptions may be threatened by schools when their organizational structures, functions, and climates are too much like jails. An over-emphasis on autocratic rules and external control rather than democratic decision-making and student participation in governance hardly enhances the kinds of self-perception that most Americans consider positive. It is especially clear from this example that values cannot be ignored when self-concept is discussed. One cannot rely just on the goal of helping students have high self-esteem; one must always ask "what kind of self?" In an autocratic militarized society, the authorities would want schools to enhance the view of self as an obedient and disciplined respector of authority, not as an independent, creative thinker and initiator of new ways of doing things. Recent interest and research in the area of "locus of control" is concerned with this contrast--the self as internally motivated and controlled or the self as reliant on an external authority for guidance. Most researchers in the U.S. appear to put a positive value on internal locus of control (Lefcourt 1976).

3. From attribute grouping to variable grouping

The dangers to self-perceptions of curriculum tracks, which are clearly labeled or recognized as inferior to other more "advanced" tracks or groupings, are painfully obvious to anyone who has been so labeled. American schools must do some serious self-analysis about such practices. Beane and Lipke believe groupings must be based on a variety of variables,

should be fluid rather than rigid, and should be more heterogenous. These arguments are also related to the practice of mainstreaming children with learning disabilities, and would tend to support most mainstreaming.

4. From avoiding parents to cooperation

The importance of parents in the formation of children's self-perceptions can hardly be over-emphasized. Some schools are beginning to do much more to integrate parents into the learning process and to attempt to educate them about methods of promoting valued self-concept. One of the few studies which have treated migrants' self-concept investigated the role of parental involvement in the educational process (Mangano and Towne 1970).

5. From accepting failure to assuring success

In some ways, this may be the most difficult goal of all, and one which even Beane and Lipke are somewhat naive about. They note that "it is unfortunate that many teachers expect some learners to fail" (1984:183). While it would seem ideal from a self-esteem point of view that noone fail, such an expectation does seem a bit unrealistic so long as schools are also designed to select out higher achievers to go on for further study. Perhaps a more realistic approach to this problem would be to emphasize students' successes and the development of talents of students on a more multi-dimensional scale; we might avoid the single-dimensional or composite scores such as grade-point averages and I.Q. scores currently in vogue and often used to categorize "winners" and "losers." A value placed on avoiding stigmatization of this nature is the basis of Denmark's law preventing the collection of so-called "ability" data. The assumption behind this legislation is that no information should be collected that could be

used for labeling or stigmatizing students (Theisen et al. 1983:62). Certainly, over-emphasis on I.Q. scores in U.S. schools can lead one to forget the multi-dimensional character of talents and abilities and, thus, of intelligence.

In summary, schools and teachers cannot encourage positive self-perceptions about just anything, for, in any social group, there are many behaviors which should not be encouraged. Neither, however, should they emphasize the selection of the "good" individuals from the "bad," for this implies that we will enhance the self-perceptions of some but will tend to degrade those of others, whom will thus be labeled "failures," or "losers." The challenge of the schools is to enhance the quality of individual and social life through the creation of successful students who will develop positive, community-conscious values as they develop positive self-esteem and clear self-concepts. That's a tall order, but, clearly, emphasis on selection of a fortunate successful few should not even be on the menu. Thus, while we must avoid condemning failures (except, of course, dangerous criminal behavior), we must set limits on acceptable behavior and define and reward desirable behavior. We must achieve an attitude akin to a loving parent or friend, one who accepts me, the "person," while setting high moral and educational standards and goals for me.

6. From ethnocentrism to acceptance of diversity

This characteristic, though not mentioned by Beane and Lipka, is also of crucial importance to self-perception. In fact, we will deal with this subject at some length in Chapter IV when we discuss migrant life-style and experiences. Suffice it to point out that teachers and schools often define acceptable performance and behavior in terms of middle and upper

class values, urban and Anglo-American perspectives. The inability to see the value in the cultures and behavior of the poor, or of rural, regional, sexual, or ethnic minorities is what is meant by ethnocentrism, class prejudice or male chauvinism. It is no easy achievement, for example, for most Americans to avoid castigating migrants for their ignorance of middle-class, urban and mainstream culture. Migrant educators are probably as guilty of these prejudices as anyone. There is a fine line, in fact, between concern for the conditions which breed poverty and ignorance (which is good) and the rejection or negative valuation of the poor and ignorant themselves (which is bad). We come to expect less of the poor and the less educated (less educated frequently in urban middle-class terms) and thus we may inadvertantly contribute to their lower achievement in school. Somehow we must learn to concentrate on compensating for differences in background and culture, and on modifying and broadening our definitions of high achievement, so as to avoid rigging the educational game in advance for the minorities, the non-mainstream, and the poor. Otherwise, the schools will continue to be places where these categories find their self-concepts and their self-esteem destroyed rather than enhanced.

II. THE NATURE OF THE BEAST AND THE STATE OF THE ART

". . .and as long as I know myself to be a coward
I will be unhappy."
-The Cowardly Lion in Baum (1979:55).

A. Useful Distinctions

As is true in many fields, the definition of terms is far from clear and universally agreed upon in the field of self-perceptions. Since all knowledge is imprecise, one should not seek only certainty but also oftentimes simply greater insight. Moreover, all research conclusions must be subject to questioning, and techniques should be subject to experimentation, not applied with blind faith. Nonetheless, greater clarity of terms needs to be sought in the analysis of self-perceptions. For example, some educators, and even researchers, fail to distinguish between self-concept and self-esteem. In this manual, the term "self-perception" is used to englobe terms such as self-concept, self-esteem, self-image and self-worth. "Self-concept" is used to designate the perceptions of self which are mainly cognitive and descriptive such as "I perceive myself to be a male, a father and a teacher." "Self-image" is a synonym of self-concept but often refers more to the physical self. "Self-esteem," however, has an evaluative and emotional aspect, a good-or-bad association as in the statement, "I am a good person," or "I am a good student." "Self-worth" also implies this evaluative aspect. To say, "I am a good mother," includes both a notion of self-concept (mother) and of self-esteem (good). It is customary to speak of enhancing the clarity of a self-concept and of increasing self-esteem.

Some researchers have also pointed out the importance of distinguishing between the "global" self-concept implied in statement such as "I am a person," from the more specific concepts such as "I am a student," or even "I'm good in math, but not in English." Research and simple reflection indicate we all have a hierarchy of self-concepts--some global, some specific--into which we may integrate many positive and negative evaluations. It is, therefore, always dangerous to impute an overall negative self-concept to an individual based on questions which elicit negative evaluations about particular aspects of self. As one research points out, many have fallen into this trap in trying to relate global self-perceptions to specific areas of school achievement. It is less likely that an individual's "general sense of self" will have as strong a correlation with success in math as the individual's self-evaluation as a good student, or especially a good math student (Bean and Lipke 1984:173).

This example also raises another serious question for self-perception research which is the "direction" of causality" question. If a person continually fails math in school, he or she is likely to develop negative self-esteem as a math student, but we cannot be sure that a negative view of math ability did not preceed and contribute to the failure. Most researchers conclude that negative performance and negative or unclear self-perceptions are mutually reinforcing and it seems unlikely that one can totally clarify or simplify this chicken-and-egg problem.

Before such uncertainties cause one to lose interest in the whole problem of self-concept and self-esteem, however, it is stimulating to consider the evidence concerning sexual or gender self-concept and its relation to actual physical and genetic characteristics. It is now well-

documented that a genetic female can "feel" male and vice-versa. The typical statement of many potential transexuals is that they feel "trapped" in a body with the wrong gender.

One of the foremost authorities on the subject writes:

> Dramatic proof that the gender identity option is open at birth for normal infants and that social forces can intervene decisively at least up to a year and a half after birth comes from a few unusual cases such as one that occurred more than ten years ago (Money and Tucker 1975:91).

The authors describe the case of a young farm couple who had identical twin boys. By accident, one of the twins' penis was burned during circumcision, causing the total loss of the organ at the age of seven months. After a great deal of trauma and many consultations with physicians, the parents decided to rear the child as a girl. The twins were then 17 months old.

Skipping many details concerning the emotional complexities and surgical procedures of the case, we note simply that the child developed a very normal female self-concept and behavior after being reassigned by the parents as a girl and undergoing further plastic surgery to form appropriate sexual organs. Though she would not be able to bear children, all evidence indicates that she could be a normal wife and (adoptive) mother. At five, the little girl "enjoyed wearing her hair ribbons, bracelets and frilly blouses, and loved being her daddy's little sweetheart." She loved her dolls, and quite unlike her twin, was neat and dainty (op. cit.: 96-98).

Another scholar has documented the great variety of differences between the behavior and achievements of males and females. She offers carefully documented evidence that girls, (on the average), consistently

score below boys in math (Maccoby 1974: 88-89). What has yet to be proven is the cause of this difference. Hormonal differences have been suggested, but most social scientists would probably agree that this phenomenon is primarily due to the U.S./American cultural stereotype or prejudice which frequently imputes a lack of math ability to females in the United States; when such a stereotype is internalized by most females it can thus produce a self-fulfilling prophecy, that is, a belief which produces a result which would not occur in the absence of the belief. Since females perceive themselves more negatively in relation to math ability than males do, they tend to perform accordingly. A simple change in the belief can lead to different results. Social life is rife with examples of this phenomenon and in fact, the whole importance of self-concept, revolves around the significance of beliefs about self, and the influence these beliefs have on behavior, regardless of the objective "truth" of the belief. In many instances, things come true simply because people <u>believe</u> they will and act on that belief. If enough people believe a healthy bank is weak, they may withdraw their money and cause it to fail. Certainly, a belief that we cannot do something often prevents us even from trying it.

This example of math achievement can also be interpreted as a result due to low expectations of significant others, sometimes called the Pygmalion Effect. The theory of this effect argues that learners tend to live up to, or down to, what others, particularly parents and teachers, expect of them. Of course, how parents and teachers <u>treat</u> children is related to their expectations, so that one should not overemphasize the psychological aspects of expectations and forget the behavioral component. For example, due to their expectations teachers may not actively encourage female students in math, in fact, they may discourage math interest and

excellence in a variety of subtle, open, overt, and covert ways. This underlines the importance not only of self-perception (what a person believes about himself or herself), but also the importance of other peoples' concepts, and treatment, of a person.

In order to further clarify thinking about self-perceptions it is useful to examine briefly the history of the study of "self" and the emergence of self-concept as a topic of concern in the psychology of learning. Essentially, we must ask ourselves what is this "self" that we perceive and how do our perceptions of it develop?

There is something in our make-up, call it "mind," that through the various senses becomes aware of its surroundings, and of the physical body which englobes it. Gradually it even becomes aware of itself. However, early psychologists and social psychologists such as William James (1890), Charles Cooley (1902) and G. H. Mead (1934) recognized that these perceptions of surroundings, of physical environment, of body, and of the self as a thinking entity with emotions and personality, are all developed in relation to other people. Moreover, people interacting with each other always have patterns of behavior (family structure, political systems) and of thought (religion, scientific beliefs); they also have a particular language and material implements (houses, clothes, tools, musical instruments). All these aspects of behavior, beliefs, and material goods can be globally designated as their <u>culture</u>. My mind/body, or self, thus becomes aware of itself through other people and my culture; through their reactions to me and communications with me, as a thinking, perceiving and acting individual self. As any group of individuals learns its own culture from others in their group (mainly parents, peers and teachers), they may modify the

cultural patterns or depart somewhat from the norms, but, in the main, they will be readily identifiable by outsiders as members of a particular culture. They are forced, in fact, to obey norms and participate in group activities by the power of group consensus. Thus, the "self" develops in a sociocultural matrix within which individual variation is allowed but restricted. This is socialization or enculturation--the broadest way to view education and learning. All new knowledge and creativity must emerge from such a base, and this is why an individual's self-concept develops almost exclusively in relation to others in his or her group.

Purkey writes that "a general state of confusion in regard to concept of self existed into the present century" (1970:3). But, then, there is no great agreement as regards its importance now. Freudian psychiatrists show more interest in what one might term the unconscious self and unconscious motivations rather than in the conscious self. Behaviorists concentrate on observable behaviors and avoid speculation about things as nebulous and variable as self-concepts. In the work of Carl Rogers and Combs and Snygg, however, a theory emphasizing the "conscious self" seeking enhancement and consistency provided the basis for renewed interest in self-concept in educational circles. Their work has been termed self-theory and self-actualization theory (Maslow 1956). Rogers summarized the self-concept as:

> "an organized configuration of perceptions of the self which are admissable to awareness. It is composed of such elements as the perceptions of one's characteristics and abilities; the percepts and concepts of the self in relation to others and to the environment" (Rogers 1951:136).

Based on these views, many educators have come to believe that "many students have difficulty in school not because of low intelligence, poor eyesight, poverty, or whatever, but because they have learned to see

themselves as incapable of handling academic work or to see the work as irrelevant to their perceptual worlds" (Purkey 1970:2). But educators must also be careful what they believe since their beliefs can certainly often become self-fulfilling prophecies!

In order to keep a clear perspective on this issue raised by Purkey, educators must bear in mind that intelligence, poverty and poor eyesight can hardly be ignored as factors in the learning process. It would be an intellectual cop-out in designing a program to enhance self-perceptions, to concern oneself with a curriculum sensitive only to the psychology of the student. Educators cannot ignore the physical and social influences on achievement. In fact, self-concept explanations of failure can become another way to "blame the victim," that is, to find explanations for failure in the inadequacies of the individual rather than in the culture, the family, and the educational system which have been largely responsible for producing that individual. Simplistic and superficial focus on the "self" in curriculum planning runs the risk of ignoring what Cooley and Mead emphasized about the social genesis of the self as well as the complexity of the factors influencing performance in school and behavior in general. One must not jump overboard into the sea of curriculum enhancement with only a psychological "self-concept" as a life perserver.

Several other important contributions to self-concept theory should be mentioned. Cooley (1902:152) coined the term "looking-glass self" to emphasize how the individual develops a self-image, self-evaluation or self-concept. This occurs through observing and accepting other persons' views and evaluations of oneself as though in a mirror. The notion that

self-perceptions are more influenced by relationships with a few "significant others" such as parents and peers was developed by Sullivan (1953). Rosenberg (1979) offered research showing that children generally rank the most significant other as follows: mothers, fathers, siblings, teachers, friends, and age-mates (peer group). Another important distinction made about self-perceptions concerns the difference between what the individual thinks is true (own self-perception) and what others, or one's culture, generally communicate. For example, persons may feel themselves to be underweight or overweight or bright or stupid when in fact their weight and intelligence as measured by the scientific community is average (Snygg and Combs 1949). Most theorists of the self emphasize that what we perceive ourselves to be is more important for our motivation than what an objective, scientific evaluation might reveal us to be; and what we perceive ourselves to be depends largely on how we think others perceive us. Moreover, it is possible to misinterpret what others really feel about us, or even to selectively filter out negative or positive reactions that do not fit the image or perception of self that has already become established. The self is dynamic, but becomes more stable over time. These views of the self lead one to stress the importance of the early years in the establishment of self-perception; they underline the importance of the parents as "significant others" in forming the child's early self-concepts. They also, however, theoretically allow for significant changes to occur throughout the life of the individual, provided that the perceptions and evaluations of him or her by others change. We have all known cases of individuals who have had apparent drastic changes in self-esteem due to unusual success of some sort which led to public fame and

acclaim. What seems less likely from the above-sketched theory is that teachers will be able to create academic success simply by convincing students to have higher self-esteem, for example, by treating them well in the classroom.

Enhanced self-concept and more positive self-esteem must be produced by interventions which reduce real failure for everyone, which involve peers and parents in the process, and which produce successes recognized by significant others in the students' world. Of course, successes which improve self-perceptions can be expected to create a positive feedback process whereby improved self-perceptions increase the likelihood of socially recognized achievement. It is equally obvious that any system which has a method of rewarding only a few high achievers, and of stigmatizing those defined as "losers," can hardly break out of the negative feedback process whereby one failure leads to another through declining self-esteem among many or the majority of students. In fact, Silvernail cites several studies which show that U.S. schools have a negative effect on most children's self-esteem. High rates of failure in school could hardly do otherwise. One study reported 84% of third graders "were proud of their work and over half felt they were doing as well in school as they would like." For eleventh graders these percentages dropped to 53% and 22% respectively (Silvernail 1981:14-17).

B. Evolution and Development of the Self

Educators concerned with enhancing self-perceptions in the school can profit from studying the changes and stages that developing children pass through. Adult stages are also of interest. Wylie (1979:26), in a thorough analysis of research, reports that there exists no clear evidence

of any association between age and "self-regard" scales when other relevant variables are properly controlled. That is, on the average, self-esteem does not increase or decrease simply as a function of age. This, of course, does not assert that certain individual or group self-esteem levels do not change but these changes can be attributed to specific environmental causes, not just to aging. Wylie also describes several studies which indicate that infants begin to recognize themselves as individuals (separate from their images in a mirror) by the age of 18 months. Basically, this research involved having mothers put a red smudge on the baby's nose after a bath so that the infant was unaware of it until a mirror was presented. If the infant responded to the smudge as though it were on it's own nose and not on the mirror image's nose, physical self-awareness was inferred. At 16 months hardly any infants showed such self-awareness, at 22 months virtually all did (Wylie 1979:11-12).

Another experiment used an infant's own photograph and those of other same-age babies. At 20 months subjects were able to correctly label their own photographs (give their own name) and labeled the similar pictures of other infants as "baby." The early development of self-awarenesses is clearly indicated by these studies, though little research has been done to show clear-cut stages or developmental types in the self-concept at sub-sequent ages.

Beane and Lipka (1984:17-28), however, offer a series of stages which are based on general physical, social and psychological development which, while they are not strictly speaking self-concept stages, offer educators a good starting point for curriculum development. Drawing on this source, we can identify four stages: the childhood self, the transescent self, the

adolescent self, and the adult self. Again, one must bear in mind that these are general stages based on average development. Individual development may only roughly approximate such generalizations.

The childhood self develops almost exclusively in relation to the parents or guardians in the home. Most U.S.-American homes are nuclear families or single-parent arrangements relatively isolated from friends and extended family. The young child is physically dependent on parents and can be molded to a frightening degree in the first few years by the household members. In middle childhood, as most children begin kindergarten and first grade their experience broadens to include other adults and peers, though parents continue as "most significant others." Self-competence becomes a key issue as performance on tasks begin to be measured in games and on school projects. Concern with personal appearance and "how other children like me" becomes apparent; "Buddy" and best-friend relationships emerge, though all these concerns intensify at the adolescent stage. Play and adult guidance are still dominant in middle childhood. In later childhood the peer group becomes more important and at eight and nine years of age children begin developing strong boy-girl relationships and an adolescent-like concern for physical appearance. Home and school in these early years are crucial for the development of positive self-perceptions. "Feelings of personal adequacy may be described as related to feelings of trust, love, belonging, and acceptance" (Reane & Lipka 1948:18). Coopersmith (1967) also mentions "clearly defined limits" and the encouragement of self-reliance within these limits as contributing to positive self-esteem in children.

The transescent self describes the transition between childhood and adolescence. It is generally defined by the onset and achievement of puberty. A fascinating but unexplained result of recent research on age of puberty indicates a constant decrease in age of menstruation in Euro-American societies over the last century. For example, in the U.S. the average age of first menstruation dropped from 14.2 to 12.5 years between 1900 and 1955, while the earliest records available (in Norway around 1845) found first menstruation to occur at about 17 years of age! (cited in Money and Tucker 1975: 156). Besides the physical maturation of sexual characteristics, cognitive functioning appears to mature and achieve full capability of conceptual abstract operations roughly between 10 and 14 years. This age period has also been recognized as the stage beyond which second language learning becomes more difficult, at least in the sense of ability to speak the second language without an accent. In U.S.-American culture the transescent and the subsequent adolescent periods are considered very stressful, though Margaret Mead argued that this is not necessarily the case in other cultures such as Samoa (Mead 1950). Certainly the transition to sexual maturity and the beginning of serious sexual experimentation with the possibility of reproduction creates a great deal of stress in our society. For the transescent youth, the peer group takes on greater importance vis-a-vis the parental and school authorities, though the adolescent period is more significant as a time of rebellion against the authority of home and school. Certainly the transescent normally becomes greatly concerned with personal appearance and physical development. Long hours may be spent in front of a mirror at this age. The sense of self related to sexual identity and worth is questioned and

begins to be established. Tightly constructed cliques develop and conflict over loyalty to the peer group as opposed to loyalty to the family's guidelines characteristically develop. A common expression at this age is "noone understands me." In the U.S. today, there are increasing rates of suicide, drug and alcohol abuse, and pregnancy in the transescent and adolescent years, indicating growing struggles and conflicts between society's and the individual's values, behavior norms, or expectations about the ideal self.

According to Piaget and Inhelder (1958), a transition from childhood's concrete thinking, to the transescents' more abstract thought occurs. Such formal cognitive operations appear to allow for more serious questioning of cultural mores and parental values. Some suggest, however, that the schools jump too quickly into tasks that require mature formal operations before the students' full acquisition of this capacity (Loepfer 1978). Certainly, self-perceptions become more complex and the individual more self-conscious; the need to try out new roles, stronger. Some would argue that the first "identity crises" begin at this stage.

For most students, the transition to junior high or middle school occurs during the period of transescence. Compared to the elementary school, the junior high and middle school are more impersonal due to the greater specialization, the numerous teachers each student encounters, the more diverse peer group and the somewhat more competitive reward system. The same trends are intensified in high school. Somewhat like the transition to college, these changes can lead to self-analysis and self-questioning which compound the problems brought on by biological and cognitive changes.

The adolescent stage in many ways simply intensifies the processes evident in the transescent period. One gradually develops a more definite career choice based on an analysis of self, one's goals and values. In a real sense, clarification of values is a way of defining self. Some adolescents even choose marriage mates and develop the independence from parents associated with adulthood. They may assume adult responsibilities of self-support and family support. For most, this period between early post-puberty and the assumption of adult roles is characterized by development of self in relation to the opposite gender, the growth of sexual and love interests. In U.S. society today, an increasing rate of adolescent pregnancies is reported; drug and alcohol abuse is a major concern. It is apparent that this is the second most important period of self-concept development, after the childhood years in which parents are so important. In adolescence, the peer group tends to dominate in the social dialectic out of which a relatively stable adult identity emerges. For those youth who enter college and postpone full entry into the work force, the ambiguous status of adolescence is prolonged and leads to a prolonged "identity crisis" which is associated with the early college years.

The adult self does not exhibit the fluidity of earlier periods. The self-concept can be modified, nonetheless, as occupational, marital and family status changes, but the core concepts of self based on self-evaluation of physical beauty or strength, of intelligence, talents and personality which are already established are not readily transformed. In recent years more attention has been given to the "mid-life crisis" and to the adjustments made necessary by old age, the decline of health, the departure of offspring and retirement. But as in earlier adulthood, these mainly "social"

adjustments in most cases do not result in great changes in the core perceptions of self.

In planning the curriculum to enhance self-perception, educators must be sensitive to the stages of development of the self. Parents and family are of crucial importance in childhood and the more dependent and malleable nature of children makes healthy self-perception development in the early years essential to later development. In transescence, the period of turmoil and reconstruction of self gives schools the opportunity to have a crucial impact as they assist students to develop independence, self-reliance and analytical thought. In adolescence, the peer-group and gender relations become so important that teachers must adapt curriculum to these crucial influences or run the risk of appearing irrelevant to the social needs of students. Counseling about adult occupational roles and opportunities must be integrated into teaching activities. Finally, as adolescents become adults, recognition of their adult capabilities and readiness for adult responsibilities must be given. Schools cannot continue to relate to them with the same authority as to children. Student participation in important school decision-making processes should be encouraged.

C. Measurement of Self-Perceptions

Most research on self-perception has centered on global self-esteem rather than on specific aspects of esteem or on the nature or description of the self-concept. Thus, a major problem of research is the tendency to neglect the diversity of characteristics which people value in themselves and others. The following list of traits are some of the most important used by groups to evaluate one of their members: physical strength and

beauty, intelligence, wealth, friendliness, generosity, kindness, humor, specific skills, moral rectitude, courage, and influence outside the group. These are also the scales on which we evaluate ourselves. They group themselves into physical, social, intellectual, and moral characteristics. Conspicuously absent from the list are terms such as introverted/extroverted, or internal/external locus of control. This leads one to question the social and personal importance of these latter pairs of concepts, however valuable they may seem to psychologists in describing personality types.

A second problem in measurement of which educators should be cognizant concerns the "reactive" nature of most self-concept measurement instruments. As Combs' notes, there is a difference between what a person believes himself or herself to be and what answers he or she actually give on a questionnaire (Purkey 1962:52).

Let us take an example from Coopersmith's Self-Esteem Inventory (1967). This questionnaire instrument contains fifty-eight statements and requires the respondent to check either "like me" or "unlike me." One example from these statements is: "I would rather play with children younger than me." Other researchers have noted that one who answers "like me" is inferred by Coopersmith "to have negative self-esteem for that item since conventional thought suggests that children who feel that way also feel rejected by their peers." These researchers, in a restudy of this question with 100 fifth and seventh graders, found that only one-third of their subjects felt that playing with younger children was negative or something about themselves which they would like to change. Thus it would seem to be inaccurate to infer that such a preference is an aspect of nega-

tive self-esteem (Beane and Lipka 1984:210-11). Coopersmith, in essence, has imposed his own negative evaluation on such a statement. But then, can we be sure that the students in the follow-up study accurately evaluated the question? It is just possible that they feel negative about playing with children younger than themselves but refused to admit it to themselves or to the researchers through the questionnaire. This illustrates the dangers of inferring too much from questionnaire data which is subject to both falsification by the respondent and misinterpretation by the researchers.

Ruth Wylie has made the most extensive survey of self-concept literature. In three massive volumes (Wylie 1961, 1974, 1979) she examines literally thousands of studies; the third volume alone discusses and lists over 1,500 books and articles. Despite the massive research, Dr. Wylie expresses strong reservations about self-concept instruments and reports a serious state of affairs as concerns actual validation of research questionnaires. She writes:

> One of the amazing and dismaying things is that, despite the existence of at least 18 scales which purport to test some aspect(s) of self-concept in preschool and kindergarten children, none was used in any published article I examined. These scales, along with 28 others purportedly suitable for older children, are listed and classified in a mimeographed document prepared for ERIC/TM by Coller (1970). With very few exceptions, even the older children's self-concept tests have not been used in published research either, nor, with rare exceptions, has anything approximating proper validation research been done on any of these 46 instruments (Wylie 1979:17).

Another specialist writes, "these sources of inaccuracy are so great and so difficult to eliminate that I do no know of any self-report device

that I would currently accept for serious research requiring assessment of self-concept" (Combs 1981:7).

Given these problems in accurately measuring self-concept with which researchers are struggling, it behooves the non-specialist to use caution in identifying, labeling or categorizing students as having clear or unclear self-concepts or as having low or high self-esteem. Fortunately, educators do not have to wait for adequate measurement in order to implement programs and teaching methods which even inadequate knowledge indicates is successful both in enhancing self-perceptions and improving performance. In any case, teachers, as they get to know students well, can probably make the best inferences about students' self-perceptions. Any inferences can be wrong, of course, but when one observes students carefully and with concern to avoid personal bias, when one listens and dialogues with empathy, when one is involved with students in activities inside and outside the classroom and the school, conclusions are most likely to be valid and realistic, more so than on a single so-called "objective" list of questions. Formal questionnaires are useful, but should be used in conjunction with the type of participant observation just described. Such is this author's point of view.

One approach to measurement which attempts to avoid as much as possible the "reactive" aspect of the research instrument and, rather, allows the respondent both to define self in his or her own terms and to evaluate the desirability of the self-definition can be described as follows:

1. Ask the respondent to simply "tell me about yourself." This should, perhaps after several trials, elicit the aspects of self which the student considers important or salient.

2. When an aspect of self is described, such as "I'm not a good speller," then one might ask "Is this something you would like to keep or change about yourself?" (this should determine whether this item is viewed positively or negatively). It is just possible that the reply would be: "Keep it, I'm good in all my other subjects and don't want my friends to be jealous" (a reaction which might occur if he or she were excellent in all subjects).

Finally, if, unlike the above example, the reason hasn't already been given, one should ask: "Could you tell me why you don't wish to change that (or keep that) about yourself?" (cf. McGuire, Fujioka and McGuire 1979; Beane and Lipka 1979:210-15).

The ultimate measure of whether a person's self-concept and self-esteem has improved or not should also be based on careful and empathetic observation and communication. If a person knows that a teacher is out to measure improvement in his or her self-perceptions, that person may be very ingenious in giving the answers he or she thinks the teacher wants to hear. But again, the major goal of schooling is to educate individuals who will develop their talents for the good of their society and their world. We are not obliged to wait for absolutely valid measures of improvement in self-concept before making recommendations about good teaching methods.

D. The Self-Doubts of Educators

At some point we educators must look at our own self-perceptions. How clear are our self-concepts? How high is our self-esteem? How do we judge ourselves as persons, as parents, as students, as teachers, as administrators, as friends, as knowledgeable persons? We must often feel doubts,

even about our knowledge of the self-concept itself, of its significance. We must face the uncertainty of all our knowledge.

A few aspects of our knowledge of self-perceptions seem fairly solid. For one, everyone has some awareness of self, concepts and feelings about self. Secondly, we all have periods of self-doubt and uncertainties about who we are, about our worth and the quality of our talents. Third, it is clear that ideas or values about what is important or what defines success vary from person to person, so that someone may feel successful, confident and proud of oneself while some others evaluate him or her very negatively, some positively. Fourth, it is nonetheless difficult and perhaps impossible for a person to have such positive self-perceptions if his or her "significant others," do not. Fifth, a partial restatement of point number four is that without successes, that is, with continued failure, as defined by our significant others, our self-esteem suffers and our self-concept becomes more insecure. Sixth, a certain maturity can be defined as the ability to live with our failures and successes, to accept success with humility and grace, and to accept failure with determination neither to give up nor to have self-confidence destroyed. We develop the ability to bounce back after setbacks. This last quality could be a definition of courage.

As educators we must somehow learn to instill self-knowledge and self-confidence, to help students overcome the fear of failure, and to create a system where success and failure are so organized as to avoid false over-confidence and egoism as well as self-destruction and self-doubt. We must face the possibility that too much emphasis and analysis of self, too much introspection, is unhealthy and can lead to becoming overly "self-

conscious," a term which implies a morbid preoccupation with self and with the possibility of rejection or failure. Certainly, one major goal we seek is the freedom of action which is liberated from the fear of failure, and which acts in confidence despite the uncertainty of success. There are no simple formulas yet devised for achieving such goals.

As far as this author is concerned, the major guidelines for teachers are still love and unconditional acceptance of students as valuable human beings, in conjunction with high expectations and heavy demands on their behavior. As always, we seem to be forced to tread a narrow path between contradictory forces -- on the one hand, we must be demanding, on the other accepting; on the one hand, loving and success-instilling, on the other, judging and justice-seeking. And the latter necessarily impiles the possibility of failure. Life is a navigation amongst such dilemmas. The study and teaching of self-perception is no exception.

III. SELF-PERCEPTIONS, U.S. CULTURE, AND ACHIEVEMENT IN SCHOOL

"Know Thyself"-Socrates

A. Self-Concept and School Achievement

Socrates obviously thought it was important to have a clear self-concept. His injunction, however, did not necessarily involve the notion of self-esteem and certainly he was not suggesting that success depends on having high self-esteem. This is a more recent and narrow hypothesis. Frequently today one hears that success depends on "believing in yourself," or "having faith in yourself." This is in rather sharp contrast to the Christian injunction to believe in God or to have faith in God as the basic guide to the moral and religious life. These examples are not meant to affirm a religious viewpoint nor to deny the importance of positive self-esteem as a factor in achieving a "successful" life; they are meant to call attention to the possibly simplistic and superficial nature of the assertions of certain writers. Some appear to believe that high self-esteem, believing in oneself, is the primary goal in life, or that high achievement in whatever endeavor is predicated on developing it. Just how important is high self-esteem?

In summarizing work up to about 1970, Purkey wrote that, "Over-all, the research evidence clearly shows a persistent and significant relationship between the self-concept and academic achievement" (Purkey 1970:15). But the answer is not as straightforward as it would appear at first glance. First, the positive relationship is a correlation, i.e., the two items occur together. Is it not possible that high academic achievement is causing a positive view of self as learner? Of course it is, and

many researchers have affirmed the importance of recognizing this. Equally crucial, one must ask is it not possible that other factors such as high intelligence (IQ) and high socioeconomic status (SES) are causing both high academic achievement and high self-esteem? Again researchers answer in the affirmative (Hansford and Hattie 1982).

In a review of the research relating self-concept measures and academic achievement among "disadvantaged students," Sarah Moore (1985) cites Calsyn and Kinny (1977) and Scheirer and Krant (1979) as supporting emphasis on "skill development approaches" in education, rather than self-concept enhancement, on the assumption that developing skills will increase both achievement and self-concept whereas enhancing self-concept has less certain effects on achievement. She also concludes that "there appears to be a relationship between an individual's self-concept and his academic achievement but causal predominance has not been confirmed nor has the importance of the effect of other variables" (Moore 1985:10).

One can probe these studies, however, for some important insights. A series of studies by Brookover and associates showed that while students with low self-concepts were nearly always below average performers, a fairly high number who profess high self-concepts perform lower than expected. The conclusion drawn was that "confidence in one's academic ability is a necessary, but not sufficient, factor in determining scholastic success" (Purkey 1979:19).

One tentative explanation of some of these findings is in the complicated influences of ethnic and socioeconomic status. A number of studies have revealed high self-concept and self-esteem scores among some ethnic minorities and some low SES students, groups that frequently have lower

academic achievement levels than their White Anglo schoolmates. Two explanations have been offered for these observations. First, one must not assume that minority groups accept the prejudicial evaluations made of them by the dominant ethnic group. Sometimes they do but not always. Blacks or Native Americans or Hispanics or poor Whites often evaluate themselves based on their own community standards and not by means of standards of the dominant mainstream culture from which most researchers come. Therefore, they may have much higher self-esteem and more positive self-concepts than the researchers and other more privileged Whites expect. Second, schools may simply be unfair and discriminatory, so that poor and minority students with talent and high self-concept do not get an equal chance to succeed; the underprivileged may also tend to reject some schools along with their middle-class values and measures of success (Soares and Soares 1969; Gecas 1973). A number of studies which show mixed results in relating self-concept to ethnicity and SES are cited in Silvernail (1981)--some show Blacks and Hispanics scoring higher on self-concept reporting instruments, some show Whites and Anglos higher. Silvernail summarizes these results by paraphrasing Brookover and Passalacqua (1978): "Black students do not base their self-evaluations on middle class Anglo standards but rather on standards reflected by family, peers, and teachers in school and social systems that are predominantly Black: (Silvernail 1981:22).

Notwithstanding these examples, other studies indicate a complex attitude towards self among minorities and the poor. Those who are most integrated into the dominant White or Anglo culture tend to have lowest self-esteem. As a corollary, currently migrant students seem to have more positive self-conceptions than settled-out formally migrant students

(Gecas 1973:589). Moreover, one is reminded of the recent Black Pride movement, and the attitude expressed most cogently in a monologue by Dick Gregory in 1970 when he said: "We wasn't saying, 'Black is Beautiful,' at the expense of 'White is Ugly.' What we was saying was, the system had warped our minds so bad that up until a few years ago, most Black people in America thought Black was ugly" (Gregory 1971). Brookover and Passalacqua (1981:292) believe that it is probably not appropriate "to compare self-concepts of academic ability across schools when the social contexts are different."

The state of research at the present time can thus be summarized by noting that numerous factors or variables in the social and cultural context directly influence both self-perceptions and achievement in school. But reciprocal and complex relationships exist between several of these factors, for example, social and family background affects self-concept, which affects motivation, which itself influences achievement. Achievement level can in turn influence motivation and self-concept. All that need concern us at this point is that self-perceptions appear to form an important link in this complex of causal relationships.

B. Nothing Succeeds Like Success--But What About Failure?

To work optimistically to promote positive self-perceptions in children requires a realistic appraisal of the educational and social conditions in which they live. There is no question but that the United States today and for many decades has been a highly competitive and individualistic society. It is a nation in which a great deal of emphasis is placed on success, in particular, economic or material success. In the schools, achievement is everywhere measured with number-grades and, in college, grade point averages are calculated to the hundredth of a point.

Even though educators may often put less emphasis on materialistic measures of success, their interest in studies of self-concept and self-esteem reflects a belief that these self-perceptions are important influences on success or failure in school and in the job market. Clear self-concepts and high self-esteem are not sought and taught primarily, if at all, as an end in themselves.

But such a cultural and educational system poses a dilemma for educators, the avoidance of which can reduce our educational efforts to triviality. If we emphasize "success" are we not forced in an indirect way to emphasize "failure" as well? By encouraging "excellence" and the "out-standing" achievement of a few, do we not run the risk of condemning the majority of students to failure? It would certainly appear to the honest observer that in most cases the success of some is premissed upon the failure of others. Criterion-referenced testing provides one example of attempts to get away from this particular syndrome, but such testing, in the cases with which this writer is familiar, provide a measure of only a very minimum level of achievement, not a level which would prepare a student, for example, to go on to college, even to a relatively non-selective state-supported institution. If our schools are organized for selecting the "talented few" and selecting out the "not so talented," then efforts to enhance self-esteem among the "failures" would appear to be doomed from the start. There is ample evidence to suggest that this is the case in most U.S. schools, i.e., we promote policies of selectivity and the glorification of a select few. Therefore, those of us working to develop positive self-concept in students whose primary experience in school is negative and failure-ridden must deal with the <u>organization of schools</u> themselves as

well as with the organization of particular learning experiences in the classroom. Such conclusions should convince us that if we wish to enhance self-perceptions of all students and to make their education a success, we must address not only the issue of teaching techniques for self enhancement but also the question of the fundamental organization and goals of schools. Can we organize learning in such a way that all students can succeed? Can schools maintain their quality and also enhance student's self-esteem while helping develop clear and healthy self-perceptions.

At least one school of educational thought and practice says "yes." This is the school which has become known as Mastery Learning. While there are other approaches with related goals and claims, it will serve our purposes here to discuss only Bloom's Mastery Learning theory.

Bloom's theory is based on the assumption that almost all students (+90%) can learn what is now being taught to the "A" students in U.S. high schools. He feels that the crucial factors are time and appropriate teaching methods. He recognizes the importance of student background, that is, what occurs at home and outside the classroom, as well as all the student's prior learning experiences, and he accepts that some students simply learn faster than others, but he argues that appropriate school organization and teaching methods can overcome these other effects if we really want to do so (Bloom 1976; Block 1971 and 1979).

Benjamin Bloom has been called the David who slew the Goliath of the "Normal Curve." This giant is really only wounded, however, not dead. The argument which inflicted a serious wound goes like this: Yes, although many human characteristics are distributed in the form of a bell-shaped curve, and even if some nebulous ability we call I.Q. is so distributed,

there is no reason to design our educational system so as to attempt to approximate it in our school results. If our goal is to create creative artists and scientists, competent teachers and engineers, skilled doctors and artisans, innovative businesspersons and politicians, what sense does it make to help them measure their learning along some supposedly "natural" distribution? It makes more sense, just as in training an airplane pilot, to be sure they have achieved a certain high level of mastery in school in their chosen skill-area. From that point they are more on their own but can be expected to continue in their professional or occupational self-development. Of course, the schools are not designed to train people to be good migrant farmworkers, and therein lies another dilemma which must be faced. Is there not a self-perception problem generated by the fact that migrant farmwork is an occupation that is virtually ignored or even stigmatized by U.S. culture and the schools? Can Mastery Learning or any other technique do more than attempt to take students out of their migrant culture? We will return to this problem in Chapter IV.

Bloom concludes, therefore, that we should teach and learn for mastery, not for an "A." In this his theory is Competency Based. He believes that if the goal for a given class is mastery at an "A" or "B" level for the entire enrollment, it can be attained, particularly if such a goal is sought beginning in the early grades so that learning deficits are not allowed to accumulate from grade to grade causing certain students to drop further and further behind with each succeeding year. His theory thus contrasts with theories of "self-paced" learning or "personalized instruction" which expect and encourage students to progress at different rates.

The most important elements for us to retain here are, first, the idea that the speed or rate of learning (which varies) must be compensated for by special efforts (attention to different learning styles, frequent feedback from students, peer teaching, clear objectives, frequent testing, etc.) to bring all students along at a roughly equal pace; second, mastery of skills or content, as defined by very clear objectives, is the goal for all students; third, clear assurance is given to all students that their success does not depend on how well or poorly other members of the class perform; fourth, it is crucial to note that Bloom is very sensitive to the importance of motivation and self-concept. The success of his method, in fact, is partially premissed on the assumption that success breeds higher motivation, self-confidence and positive self-esteem which in turn contribute to the same positive feedback process we have already discussed. In other words, success breeds success and high achievement and self-esteem reinforce each other. Bloom and others offer a good deal of evidence that his method works (Lahdes 1980). His theories even appear to be more popular and more widely applied in Japan and Europe than in the United States, though Bloom has taught for years at the University of Chicago (Randt 1979:160; Lahdes 1983:95). The phenomenal success of Japan, Sweden and New Zealand on International Achievement tests would indicate that school systems dedicated to high achievement of all (supported, of course, by the elimination of their poverty classes, of tracking in schools, and the promotion of an egalitarian ethos) can attain their goals. Studstill (1984) concluded that the United States has a great deal to learn about democracy and egalitarian values in education from Sweden and Japan.

Perhaps the one most detrimental aspect of current U.S. educational practice, and the aspect most in contrast to Mastery Learning, is the system of tracking. This pernicious method of condemning students to second-class educational status even in the early years, virtually assures that those in "inferior" tracks will label themselves as "inferior" and will remain trapped in their low status. A classic, though perhaps extreme, example of "ability grouping" was documented by Rist (1970). He carefully describes how children in a ghetto kindergarten class were put into three groups based on the teacher's personal judgment of their abilities. In the opinion of the researchers the grouping was, in the absence of any aptitude test data, totally based on the social class of the children. This same grouping was entirely maintained in the first grade and second grade where instead of being labeled I, II, and III, they were called "Tigers," "Cardinals" and "Clowns," respectively. By the second grade, the groupings were based on past performance in reading more than anything else, though I.Q. test data were also available. Finally, the three groups of students were now reading from three different books with no chance of moving from one group to the other no matter how much an individual might improve. The grouping, in other words, had taken on an aura of scientific reliability and inevitability, while in fact it was based on nothing more than the kindergarten teacher's class prejudices, and this is in an all-Black environment with Black teachers and administrators.

Even before the end of the kindergarten year this process had, through preferential treatment of the so-called "fast-learners," created a condition wherein the Table I students did nearly all the talking, and wherein students at Tables II and III regularly referred to each other as "dumb-dumb," "nigger," or "almondhead." A sample description follows:

> The children were preparing to go on a field trip to a local dairy. The teacher has designated Gregory (Table I) as the "sheriff" for the trip...Mrs. Caplow simply watched as Gregory would walk up to a student and push him back into line saying, "Boy, stand where you suppose to." Several times he went up to students from Table III, showed them the badge that the teacher had given to him and said, "Teacher made me Sheriff" (Rist 1970:430).

Beane and Lipka (1984:39) assert: "the idea that ability grouping fosters affective and cognitive development simply does not make sense when one looks at research on the topic." Esposito (1973) reviewed fifty years of research and concluded that while ability grouping can sometimes offer an advantage to some but not all high ability students, it definitely most often operates to the disadvantage of the average and below average ability students (cited in Beane and Lipka 1984:39).

An opposite sort of danger exists in the Mastery Learning approach-the danger of diminished standards, reduced demands on students and "holding-back" of students of exceptional ability. Evidence cited by Bloom (1976, 1981) tends to show that such dangers can be readily avoided. Bloom suggests that truly exceptional learners should be given "enrichment" activities outside the classroom. The experiences of Japanese and Scandinavian schools show that the highest achieving students are not inhibited by heterogenous grouping nor by group teaching methods (Wolf 1977; Cummings 1980:146-50). Of course, the success of these nations in eliminating their poverty classes has also contributed to their high levels of performance in school. Scandinavia and Japan appear to have the most egalitarian distribution of wealth of any of the technologically developed nations (Cummings 1982; Heidenheimer et al. 1983: 15, 227; Vogel 1980).

IV. MIGRANTS, SCHOOLS AND SELF-PERCEPTIONS

> "Other disadvantaged groups received recognition during the social revolutions of the 1960's; farm workers have remained invisible" (Goldfarb 1981:xiv).

A. The Migrant Experience

Migrant farmworkers are among the poorest and hardest-working people in the United States. They have some of the highest rates of infant mortality, the lowest rates of life expectancy, the highest school dropout rates, and the poorest housing and health conditions. Despite their espousal of the work ethic, and acceptance of poverty wages, they are shunned by some, and unknown to most, U.S.-Americans. What are the migrant's self-perceptions like? Noone really knows. We usually assume they must be like the perceptions we have of them, accompanied by low esteem and lacking in self-confidence in dealing with the larger society. This is the image that emerges from reading what educators of migrants say; little research exists to find out what migrants think of themselves.

One educator writes in the major migrant educators' newsletter:

> Most migrant kids drop out at the secondary level. Equally dire consequences result from dropping out or from being pushed through school while learning little or nothing. What, for example, about social studies?
>
> "These kids can't read a map. They know nothing of the issues of wars. They know nothing about voting, social security, taxes, agencies of government, the three branches of government, courts, electoral colleges, freedom of the press, newspapers -- nothing," Huck says.
>
> "They can't analyze information in the three-dimensional world they live in," Huck points out (ANON 1984:13).

Yet, there are many supposedly educated non-migrants among us who know little or nothing of the "issues of wars," or "agencies of government," who never vote, and who care little for "freedom of the press." We must be careful not to overdo the negative view of migrants. The knowledge they have, and their self-concepts may be superior in many ways to that of middle-class and upper-class U.S.-Americans. Let us take an example.

Robert Coles, in Migrants, Sharecroppers, Mountaineers first quotes a grower who hires migrants to harvest his crops and who thinks he knows his workers well: "Sure, some of them have their babies away from hospitals. I know that. We'd never turn them away from a hospital, here or anyplace. But they have their own life, you know, and they don't do things the way we do. It's ignorance; and it's superstition" (Coles 1971:48).

Then, he lets a migrant woman from Sylvester, Georgia describe her experiences with hospitals and childbirth. "When we asked to see a doctor and I said I was hurting, and there'd be a baby soon, the way it looked, the nurse said who was my doctor, and my momma she said there wasn't any."

The nurse asks for a deposit for a bed, a sum which appears astronomical to the farmworker. None forthcoming, she suggests they hurry to the county hospital some miles away, where they might take her. The woman has her baby at home without benefit of doctors, "real easy like" that time.

"The next time we tried another hospital, but it was the same thing. So, after that, we knew what to expect, yessir. You get to know about things after a while" (Coles 1971:49).

As Coles remarks, she might be ignorant and illiterate, yet she had more accurate knowledge of how the hospitals operate than did the grower.

"She needed no teacher, no social scientist to tell her the economic and political facts of life, of her life."

The point of this exercise is to question simplistic images we may have of migrants and to begin to guess why their own self-perceptions may be much less negative than middle class concepts of migrants. Cole's intimate studies of migrants help us see that they are no more ignorant than other groups of citizens, they are just ignorant about different things. He shows how little outsiders often understand of the complex relationship between workers and their crew leaders, or of the social and economic forces that create migrants.

Even if we cannot adequately explain why our culture creates and maintains migrant farmworkers in a state of virtual peonage, not unlike the condition of slaves on Southern plantations before the Civil War, we can at least give a picture of some of the present conditions of existence. Even if we can only guess at their self-concepts, and their view of U.S.-American society as they see it, we can at least observe to some degree how U.S. society treats them.

Various estimates put the U.S. migrant school-age population at around one million, the migrant farmworker population at between two and four million (Office of the Commissioner of Education-Florida 1985:11). The uncertainties about totals in this area are enormous. One source reports that 25% to 88% of the total U.S. harvest can be attributed to undocumented field workers. (Lewis 1979, cited in Office of the Commissioner of Education, 1985:11). Perhaps these uncertainties on the part of U.S. officialdom about the very existence of migrant workers express best of all the character of migrant life in the United States - migrants are largely

unknown and ignored. When they are recognized they are pitied or detested. In such a situation, one might well prefer to go unrecognized. So, despite the fact that nearly the entire U.S. population depends for its very survival on migrant harvesters of the nation's food, most U.S. citizens are unaware of their existence. This can hardly, therefore, be called the "migrant problem," let us rather refer to the ignorance and the "problem" of the non-migrants, of mainstream America.

Due to a scandalous rate of malnutrition (10 times the national average), high infant mortality, and hazardous working conditions, the average life expectancy of migrant farmworkers is 49 years compared to the U.S. average of 73 years (Office of the Commissioner of Education 1985:10). This is about the same (49 years) as the average life-span of the poorest nations in Africa and is thus as low as the average length of life anywhere in the world (Sivard 1983:41). Estimates of 1985 average annual income between $4,000 and $6,000 indicate that virtually all migrant families fall beneath the official U.S. poverty level which in 1984 was $9,287 for a family of four (Mattera 1980:28; Ockerman 1984:63).

Certain diseases are incredibly frequent amongst migrants, for example, tuberculosis which is 17 times more frequent than among patients seen by private physicians (Mattera 1980:29). Given these problems, and the necessity for children to be pulled out of school to accompany their parents in their search for harvests, it is hardly surprising that few migrant students finish high school. Most estimates of dropout rates range between 80% and 90% over the 12 years of normal schooling.

The migrant experience has been created by the growth of agribusiness or industrialized agriculture which began in the U.S. after the Civil War.

In many ways, the conditions of migrant farmworkers are like those of early factory workers in the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century in Europe and America, but due to their marginal and fragmented living areas, the seasonal nature of their market, and their mobility they, unlike other sectors of the urban industrial working class, have been unable to organize unions to protect their interests and improve their working conditions (Goldfarb 1981:5-8).

Migrant farmworkers aid in harvesting an enormous variety of crops: citrus in Florida, cucumbers in the Carolinas, tobacco in Connecticut, tomatoes in Delaware, apples in Virginia, sugar beets in Colorado, cherries in Washington, avocados in California; there are vineyards and lettuce in California, and other farms produce melons, potatoes, asparagus, blueberries, strawberries, "all the rich and varied products of the land" (Goldfarb 1981:3).

The image such descriptions create is one of power and grandeur, yet, since Steinbeck's Grapes of Wrath, such images of a noble struggle to survive against a cruel and ignorant environment interact with other images of poverty, despair and marginality. No doubt these same images find expression in the self-concepts of migrants.

Part of the despair of migrant worklife derives from the increasing mechanization of production, which despite the growth of agribusiness and the death of family farms (which would normally increase the demand for seasonal laborers), has resulted in an overall declining demand for migrant labor. There appears to be a declining migrant population, but given the difficulties in counting migrants and the uncertainties of the statisticians, noone can be sure. In any case, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has estimated that half of all U.S. farms had gone out of business by World

War II and family farms disappear at the rate of 2,000 per week. In California, for example, about 4% of the state's farms encompass 70% of the farmland (Goldfarb 1981:12-15).

Other studies have cataloged the horrors of the living conditions, the exposure to poisonous chemicals, the hunger, poverty, and social stigmas which migrant farmworkers must endure (Cf. Thomas-Lycklama a Nijeholt 1980; Wright 1965). The least we as educators can do is to avoid adding silly descriptions of the ignorance of migrant students, which in essence are little more than descriptions of how they are not like urban, middle-class school children. This is a bit like someone pushing a child who has never been near water into a lake, and then showing fascination in describing in detail their incapacity to deal with their new environment.

B. The Schools

When migrant children enter schools they are probably most often confronted by teachers who may pity them and probably want to help them. This might be termed the Missionary Mentality. But such attitudes are not necessarily conducive to enhancing the self-perceptions of migrants. As is probably clear from the preceeding section, this author believes that the fundamental causes for migrant poverty and marginality are the structures of the U.S. economy, not any problem of migrant incapacity. Our attitudes towards migrant children should thus be less tuned to pity and more to outrage at the conditions which they did not choose but which are forced upon them; an attitude of comaraderie in the face of the immorality of a political and economic system which allows some people who never work at all to enjoy unbelievable luxuries, while those who do back-breaking work under a blazing sun can actually go to bed hungry at night.

One belief that schools and educators need to lay to rest, in order to be fair to migrant children and to lay the foundations for enhancing their self-concepts, is the belief that schools offer an equal educational opportunity to all and, therefore, that when students fail it is their own fault. Certainly, most sensitive educators know that one can not simply "throw it out there, so that those who don't get it have only themselves to blame." The whole notion of compensatory education, from which the migrant education program derives, is a notion which recognizes that educating certain categories and types of children means giving them special treatment, not equal treatment. Unequal treatment is, of course, a more complex and problematic notion than "equal treatment." It creates difficulties for educators and requires complicated judgments about who deserves what, and how much, extra attention. But of such complexities is all life composed.

One of the most subtle forms of avoiding these complexities and of blaming certain disadvantaged students, rather than the social and cultural system, for their problems has been the attitude deriving from the so-called "culture of poverty" theory. This theory is really a set of beliefs about poor people which tend to explain their behavior as a kind of inevitable result of their beliefs and values rather than as a result of political and economic underprivilege and discrimination by the more powerful and dominant "culture." It creates an image of the poor, a concept of the poor, as bound to their ways (their culture), a false kind of respect which says "who are we to try to judge their ways and change them?"

The element of truth in the theory of the "culture of poverty" is that, yes, there are many things of value in any culture; one should not fail to recognize that in many ways the contributions, beliefs and behaviors

of poor migrants, Blacks or Hispanics are not inferior to those of middle-class Whites, but are just different. The falsity of the view is in its tendency to avoid addressing the root causes of the poverty, ignorance and discrimination that create the obviously inferior elements which some supporters of the culture of poverty view refuse to admit exist, because (so they pretend) the aspects of each behavior pattern, each culture, are of equal worth--one is as good as another. Poverty can even become a virtue in this view, but, even so, rarely do we find the intellectuals who develop such views ready to become ghetto dwellers or migrant workers.

Schools and educators should thus accept the aspect of the "culture of poverty" theory which wishes to show the valuable elements in the cultures of the poor, White and non-White. But they must avoid accepting the notion that the cultures of the poor "cause" their poverty in any fundamental sense. The grower who says migrant women prefer to give birth at home might be right in certain cases or in a certain sense, but he fails to recognize the realities of health care which, in fact, force her to stay home. It is not, it would appear, the culture of the woman which leads her to have home-births, it is first, and foremost her inability to do otherwise. Poverty and U.S. hospitals are the causes, not the "culture of poverty."

In this context, educators are in a delicate situation. If they accept the notion that it is not the fault of the migrant children that they are the way they are, that they are poor, that their parents have little formal education, that they move too often, that they drop out of school; that is, if they (educators) accept that it is not the migrants' "cultural patterns" that are creating the situation, but rather the structure of the U.S. farm economy, the laws and the political system, then

educators are well-placed to reinforce migrants' positive self-perceptions. Unfortunately for the educator, however, he or she now must at this point confront the necessity of critiquing the dominant culture, the political system, the economic powers. The educator has become a reformist. The temptation at this point is then to take refuge in various forms of avoidance of the issues, and to seek refuge in "blaming the victim." Yet education itself, according to one of the basic tenets of the U.S. belief system, should lead to the amelioration of our nation--nothing is more American than a belief in improvement and progress and in the schools' role in this process. Carrying out such improvement--putting the belief into practice--is a horse of a different color.

At the least, we as educators can avoid the temptation to "blame the victims" (Ryan 1976). We can learn at least to change some of our behavior which may be destroying the positive self-perceptions of migrant children. Persell, in reviewing a number of studies of the "culture of poverty" notes "something happens to the initially high self-esteem of disadvantaged youngsters as they encounter predominantly White middle-class teachers and institutions. Hence, it is not the pathology of their homes but something else that seems to affect their self-esteem" (Persell 1977:78). I would suggest it is the pity and the low esteem teachers often feel for them and the failures the poor begin immediately to encounter.

To conclude this chapter let us examine studies of language which relate to these questions of teacher attitudes and the disadvantaged.

A number of researchers in the 1960's promoted the idea that disadvantaged youth, or lower class youth both in the U.S. and Great Britain were in large part handicapped by inferior dialects or vernaculars of English (Persell 1977:80). Non-standard English was felt by many to be not just

different but fundamentally inferior, restricted, non-logical and generally incapable of expressing the complex ideas of a presumably more elaborate dialect spoken in more educated middle and upper class groups. Following the studies of a number of nay-saying researchers, however, much more nuanced and no doubt accurate evaluation of non-standard dialects has emerged. As Labov (1973) has argued in his studies of lower-class Black children, these youth are anything but verbally deprived. The expressiveness of Black dialect as practiced by U.S. Black comedians has recently come to delight the public as much as Black music. Labov even notes that, from a certain perspective, middle-class language, may appear inferior, less colorful and poetic, more redundant, turgid, bombastic and empty.

While differences in language styles and dialects are undeniable, the inferiority or the non-logical character of some has not been demonstrated. To succeed in school, however those who speak a non-standard dialect (or possibly another language) at home must make a larger adjustment than others. It is the teacher's task to teach the standard dialect, without condemning the non-standard one; even beyond this, one can enjoy the variations and literary value of non-standard dialects while emphasizing also the advantages of having one dialect which all citizens can understand.

Sensitivity to language differences and the problems children have in adapting to the standard English used and taught in schools is especially important for teachers of migrants. Around 75% of migrant workers in the U.S. are Spanish-speaking. Thus teachers must avoid giving the impression that this is a negative aspect of a child's culture and self. In most societies the ability to speak several languages is prized, and so it should be.

In conclusion, to enhance the self perceptions of migrant children, educators must show concern for the disadvantages and hostile environment that migrants must face and, at the sometime, avoid a kind of pity that might derive from a negative evaluation of the migrant culture or a migrant individual. Certainly, blaming the migrant culture, or language, or family structure as the origin of the migrants' problems is a false placing of responsibility which can damage the child's self-esteem. As we have argued, if the responsibility for the sufferings and disadvantages of farmworkers are traced to their source, we find it in the structure of the U.S. agricultural economy.

John Mack (1983:29) writes in a recent book of childhood self-esteem, "The complexity of self-esteem development derives from its initial dependance upon two separate but interrelated domains--the phenomenon of mastery and the area of human relationships." Educators and schools must somehow help compensate for the socioeconomic disadvantages which are the migrants' lot, and create a human environment where mastery and success are possible. Perhaps out of this context will come an empowerment of migrant workers and their supporters which will transform even the socioeconomic structures on which they are crucified.

Empowerment is the term that is used more and more currently to describe the process by which the poor and powerless begin to gain more control over their own destinies and their working conditions in order to improve their standards of living and quality of life. Education and educators have an essential role to play in this process. In the next chapter we will suggest some ways that the school curriculum should reflect the goal of empowerment of migrants.

To conclude and summarize this chapter we ask the following rhetorical questions: Is it possible that in the education of migrants teachers have systematically devalued what these children know and made them look dumb in comparison to what middle-class children know? Is it possible that their, languages, cultures and ethnic groups have been devalued and stigmatized in the schools? Is it possible that we educators of migrants accept this cultural devaluation so that our role of "bringing them up" will appear all the more crucial, but that in so devaluing them we help assure our own defeat in our educational role by creating negative self-perceptions in our students?

I do believe that migrants need special help to perform well in school, but more and more, I believe the schools must be modified to <u>allow</u> the migrant students' abilities to be revealed in high performance. Can we not devise ways to <u>assure</u> that the migrant child will develop positive self-perceptions and will succeed just as we (with their parents) seek to assure that disadvantaged upper class children will -- even those upper class children with few talents, from non-White ethnic groups and of the female sex?

V. METHODS AND TECHNIQUES FOR ENHANCING MIGRANT SELF-PERCEPTIONS

The Setting

As we have argued in the preceeding chapters the schools cannot treat poor, minority-group, underprivileged migrant students the same as affluent, white, middle and upper class urban children and expect them to achieve equally as well. Compensatory education programs are premissed on the principle that unequals must be treated unequally in order to obtain equal results.

We have also argued that to enhance the self-perceptions (or just to avoid tearing down the healthy perceptions) that young migrant children bring to schools, schools and teachers must do more than simply try to help students "feel good about themselves." There are means to assure that migrants succeed in school and this is likely to enhance self-concepts and self-esteem more than any one thing. Of course, helping students "feel good about themselves," or at least about those aspects of themselves that are morally acceptable, is one way to help students succeed. Positive self-perception is one of the factors influencing high achievement, but high achievement will almost certainly in turn enhance self-esteem and help clarify one's self-concept. Successes help one define himself or herself in terms of what one is good at, and to define and admit those aspects of oneself that are deficient.

The Organization of Schools and the Curriculum

To create a supportive environment for migrant children, schools must look to their overall philosophy of education and organizational structure, as well as to their curriculum and classroom teaching methods. This manual

has suggested that a philosophy of education based on Mastery Learning theory and the expectation that all students can and will achieve mastery is the most positive and productive philosophy. In turn, an organizational structure which avoids tracking or separating students into high and low achievers and which, at the most, separates groups simply by different specializations, is the most likely to avoid stigmatizing and creating negative self-perceptions in students. At the same time, high standards must be maintained and this is where supplemental efforts and attention are required for underprivileged groups and slower learners. The vast differences in income and living standards generated by the U.S. economy (and by migrant labor conditions especially) make the task of the schools very difficult. The more egalitarian conditions prevailing in countries like Japan and Sweden reduce schooling problems, dropout rates and the like, but the difficult U.S. conditions are simply conditions which U.S. educators must struggle to ameliorate and for which they must compensate in any way they can. The emphasis on compensation for deficiencies brought about by social background and living standards must be reflected, therefore, in the overall organization and activities of schools.

But there are dilemmas here. Compensatory activities frequently result in separating groups from mainstream classrooms which can easily become a kind of tracking into superior and inferior curricula -- the effect being just the opposite of the original goal sought, i.e., an equal, not an inferior, educational result for disadvantaged students. The recognition of this dilemma - this very real danger, in fact - has lead many educators to promote extra tutorials or supplementary activities in addition to the regular classroom work rather than separate classes. Probably,

only in certain extreme cases, such as that of the non-English-speaking student, should individuals be totally pulled out of the regular classroom, and this only for a limited period of time, i.e., until they are able to understand regular classroom instruction.

Probably the most important and effective manner to compensate for the disadvantaged conditions of migrant students is a program of work-study after regular class-time. The study should be of a supplemental nature for students beginning at an early age so as to prevent them from falling behind in their schoolwork. Pre-school programs are obviously indicated in order to avoid the deficiencies probable at the earliest stages of education and to help migrant children get off to a good start in first grade. As students reach the age to be gainfully employed, work-study programs can be important in providing material incentives for parents and students to continue supporting the educational process, and to avoid early dropouts due to the need to seek gainful employment. Learn-and-Earn type programs have proved very popular and successful among migrants when the programs are carefully planned to meet both academic and employment needs (Studstill and Snow 1985).

Of course, educators and administrators themselves must be trained to <u>believe</u> in the necessity and rationale for these compensatory efforts. Staff development training must be provided to offset negative stereotypes of migrants and other disadvantaged categories. The best way to do this is to offer arguments and explanations such as the ones provided in the preceeding chapters of this manual which demonstrate that the migrant lifestyle, culture and educational deficiencies do not derive from inherent inferiorities of migrant workers and children but from the nature of the U.S. agricultural and economic system and the past failures of the politi-

cal and educational system to compensate for the resulting inequalities. If educators and administrators believe that migrant workers and children are inherently inferior, or that little can be done to offset the impact of negative conditions, then they are likely to perpetuate inequalities and create negative self-perceptions, unclear and contradictory self-concepts and poor self-esteem in migrant children. Moreover, a failure to appreciate the damage to self-perceptions that can derive from a tracking system or a separation of migrant students out of the mainstream classroom, can result in efforts at compensation which do more harm than good.

The Curriculum also must be designed to enhance migrants self-concepts and self-esteem, and it must be a curriculum that insures success without lowering standards. Some of the elements of this curriculum are the following:

1. Provides information about the migrant way of life, the causes of their poverty and mobile life-style.

2. Provides an appreciation of migrant culture and the essential contributions of migrant workers to the economy and well-being of the nation.

3. Suggests ways for migrants to take hold of their own destiny and to begin solving their problems though their own efforts.

4. Relates this notion of empowerment to the ideals of democracy which are based on the notion of people controlling their own lives.

5. Provides information about publications and organizations specifically for migrant workers, about legislation to protect and empower migrants, about conditions and organization of migrants in other countries where educational conditions and standards of living are better, e.g., Sweden and West Germany.

Information on all of these topics is available in the following publications:

Migrant Farm Workers: A Caste of Despair (Goldfarb 1981).

On the Road for Work: Migratory Workers on the East Coast of the United States (Thomas-Lycklama a Nijeholt 1980).

Seasonal Agricultural Labor Markets in the United States (Emerson 1984).

Legislation and the Migratory Farmworker (Chen 1984).

Forty Acres: Cesar Chavez and the Farm Workers (Day 1971).

The Quiet Revolution: How Florida Migrants Changed Their Lives (Harris and Allen 1978).

"Empowerment Movements and Mental Health: Locus of Control and Commitment to the United Farm Workers" (Hoffman 1978).

"Insurgency of the Powerless: Farmworkers Movements, 1946-1972" (Jenkins and Perrow 1977).

Uprooted Children: The Early Life of Migrant Farmworkers (Coles 1970).

Education of Migrant Workers' Children in the European Community (Commission of the European Communities 1975).

Migrant Adaptation: A Cross-Cultural Problem (Ekstrand 1977). Materials on European workers.

"Unpopular Views on Popular Beliefs about Immigrant Children: Contemporary Practices and Problems in Sweden" (Ekstrand 1981).

"Migrant Parents' Rights and Responsibilities: A Handbook" (Gonzales 1982).

There are, of course, many activities and techniques which can be used to emphasize self-perception enhancement which can be beneficial for both migrant and non-migrant students, and it will depend on the teachers to give content which will be specifically of value to migrant students. Before turning to specific classroom techniques for enhancing self-perceptions we will emphasize ways to implement two previously mentioned recommendations which can contribute to improving self-perceptions -- allowing students more participation in school decision-making and bringing parents into more active involvement with learning.

The first goal of "more student decision-making" was implemented in a Pennsylvania school through development of the "Town Meeting" model within the school itself. This model, based on the notion of a pure democracy in which all community members participate as political equals, has specific objectives and procedures which are listed by Smith and Hess (Beane and Lipka 1984:43). Several can be summarized as follows. Objectives of the "Town meeting" in school:

1. Development of values
2. Developing an awareness of one's own opinions
3. Learning how to participate in the democratic process
4. Learning the process of conducting a public meeting
5. Developing awareness of student responsibility
6. Formulating and implementing regulations
7. Planning and implementing special projects such as field trips, special events, and parties

It should be clear that training in leadership and democratic processes such as this could prepare students to participate in even more meaningful policy-making than is suggested by the examples of Smith and

Hess. In open forums such as these where students were really encouraged to take a meaningful part, not only could self-perceptions be enormously improved but real and creative solutions to many migrant problems might very well be found. On the other hand, nothing leads to apathy and negative self-perceptions as much as the experience of powerlessness, coercion by authorities, and the recognition that noone will listen seriously to what one has to say or consider one capable of finding solutions to problems.

A second very important type of activity which has been shown to have positive effects on student self-perceptions and school performance is the integration of students' families into school activities. Mangano and Towne (1970:17-28) report the positive results from an experiment which actually provided a course of training for migrant parents in both active involvement in their children's school activities and in ways to enhance their children's self-concept as learners and as students.

Bringing migrant parents to the schools for education and improvement of relations, may appear difficult or even impossible at first sight, and yet a great deal is already happening in Migrant Education in those states where migrant Parent Advisory Committees (PAC's) have been created and promoted.

Teaching Techniques Which Enhance Self-Perception

Due to the fact that a number of curriculum materials exist for helping plan classroom activities which will clarify and give value to the self-perceptions of children, this final section will mainly provide samples and examples and will point the reader to important available materials.

Dr. Robert Heller (1974) has written a Teacher Resource Guide for the Development of Positive Self-Concept in Migrant Children which is available

from the Migrant Center State University of New York Genesco, NY 14454. He divides his suggestions into two chapters, one which lists learning objectives for pupils and process objectives for teachers, the other which describes effective methods and materials used in developing "positive self-concept."

A few sample objectives from the list of 58 are:

- the pupil will demonstrate self-identification by writing a brief autobiography which describes ten facts of his/her life.

- the pupil will demonstrate identification with parents' occupation by drawing pictures of crops harvested or worked by the parents.

- with some explanations and further instructions, the pupil will describe at least three problems she or he has now but which will be overcome in adulthood (op. cit.:26, 27).

Commenting on these examples one can observe a number of important possibilities for elaboration of the themes of empowerment and transformation of lifestyles, of the value to the U.S. economy of migrant workers, of stories of exemplary leaders of farmworkers, of the causes of the migrant condition, and of the responsibilities we all have to help solve problems of our fellow citizens.

Objectives concerned with teacher behaviors and attitudes, from Heller's list of 31 are:

1. Organize an in-service workshop to increase awareness of attitude and biases which inhibit effectiveness in improving migrants self-perceptions [I would also add organizational structures and curricula which have this effect].

2. In periodic home visits with parents, elicit at least one prescription for the pupil's self-actualization.

3. Provide to each pupil each school year at least two opportunities to assist in managing the classroom [and one might add, in making democratic decisions and choices in planning in-class activities].

4. devise each year a new method for a one-to-one interaction with each student for a duration of at least 30 minutes, e.g., a home visit, private talk, game, etc. (op. cit.: 30-31).

Examples of effective methods and materials were garnered by Heller from numerous primary sources such as Child Learning Through Child Play (Gordon et al. 1972), and from personal communications from numerous individual educators to whom he wrote for suggestions from their own personal repertory. A list of film resources is also provided with especially relevant titles such as The Wheat Farmer (Encyclopedia Britannica), La Raza: The Mexican-American (a series of 24 filmstrips, records and teacher's manual produced by the Arizona Migrant Child Education Laboratory Resource Center, Arizona State Department of Education, Phoenix, Arizona 85007). Finally, an annotated bibliography of short fiction for the primary level is provided which is relevant to migrants and/or self-perception development, e.g.:

> Migrant Girl (Laklan 1970), "How Big Am I?," and Just One Me. Source: BEST RECORDS, Books, Rhythm Instruments, Children's Music Center, Inc. (op. cit. 33-81).

The methods and techniques suggested are organized into groups labeled "Use of Name," "Characteristics of Individual Pupils," "Creative Expressions and the Environment," "Use of Songs," and "Miscellaneous Methods." This last category also mentions categories which "Increase Motivation," "Promote Social Growth," "Promote Self-Talk." Finally, some objectives and activities are divided into sections relevant for preschool, first, second and third grades.

In a paragraph on recommendations from the Head Start program on Things to Avoid Saying, we read that the teacher should never make invid-

ious comparisons between children in order to shame one into trying harder. (Certainly a frequent temptation for teachers). Shame embarrasses and inhibits at this age. One should not put pressure on a four-year-old to be "less like a baby and more like a big boy, because he is neither a baby nor a big boy" [or big girl], and such pressure may simply make a child feel that being four is not good or that he/she is inadequate and inferior. (Source: Jeanette W. Galambos, 1970, Head Start to Confidence).

Taking one example from the section on "Characteristics of Individual Pupils," we find a technique that is useful for any age-group. "Use a portable video-tape system to film children in various daily activities. Play back the results for them to see. A variety of interesting discussions about observed behaviors can result. Such observations and discussions add tremendous insight to a child's self-awareness and his/her relationships with others. They see themselves and hear the comments of their peers." (Source: Gloria Mattera, Director, New York State Migrant Center, State University, Geneseo, NY 14454).

A second highly recommendable and available primary resource of activities applicable from pre-school to sixth grade is the ASSIST Program (Affective Skills Sequentially Introduced and Systematically Taught). The four manuals are pictured and described below.

Two samples of two lessons from The Volume Building Self Concept in the Classroom (Huggins 1983) follows:

YOU'RE ONE-OF-A-KIND

OBJECTIVE Students will understand that each person is unique. Students will describe ways in which they are unique and special.

PREVIEW Students examine the differences in peanuts and then discuss ways in which each person is different. They begin working on writing and drawing activities in their own "I'm One-Of-A-Kind" workbook.

MATERIALS Transparency #1, "Every Person's Body is One-Of-a-Kind; Transparency #2, "Each Person Has a One-Of-a-Kind Personality"; Transparency #3, "Each Person Has a One-Of-a-Kind Situation", "I'm One-Of-a-Kind" workbook. Both a primary and intermediate workbook are included at the back of this manual. You may choose to select certain pages or run off the entire workbook for your grade level.

TO THE TEACHER Each human being is a unique constellation of identical "life stuff" - a special event in the universe. The likelihood of any one person ever being genetically like another is $10^{2,400,000,000}$[1]. Each person contributes to the world in a unique way and with his or her own unique conditioning.

One of the ways for students to develop a positive self-concept is to acquire an awareness of their personal uniqueness. Each student needs to know and feel that he or she is somehow special, one of a kind, and can never be duplicated. Students need to know that there is no standard mold for a human and that being different from others is normal.

The following lesson is designed to give each student a sense of his or her own uniqueness as well as an awareness of the uniqueness of every other person. The lesson is also intended

[1]Dorothy Briggs, Celebrate Your Self. Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday & Co., 1971.

EVERYBODY HAS A ONE-OF-A-KIND BODY

YOUR SIZE
YOUR BODY SHAPE
YOUR FACIAL FEATURES
YOUR EYES
YOUR FINGERPRINTS
YOUR HAIR
YOUR TEETH
YOUR ODOR

ALL OF THESE THINGS
MAKE YOUR BODY ONE-OF-A-KIND.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SELF CONCEPT
Unit A - Lesson 2

YOU'RE A PERSON OF MANY PARTS

OBJECTIVE — Students will realize that they are multifaceted people. Students will focus on their strengths rather than their weaknesses.

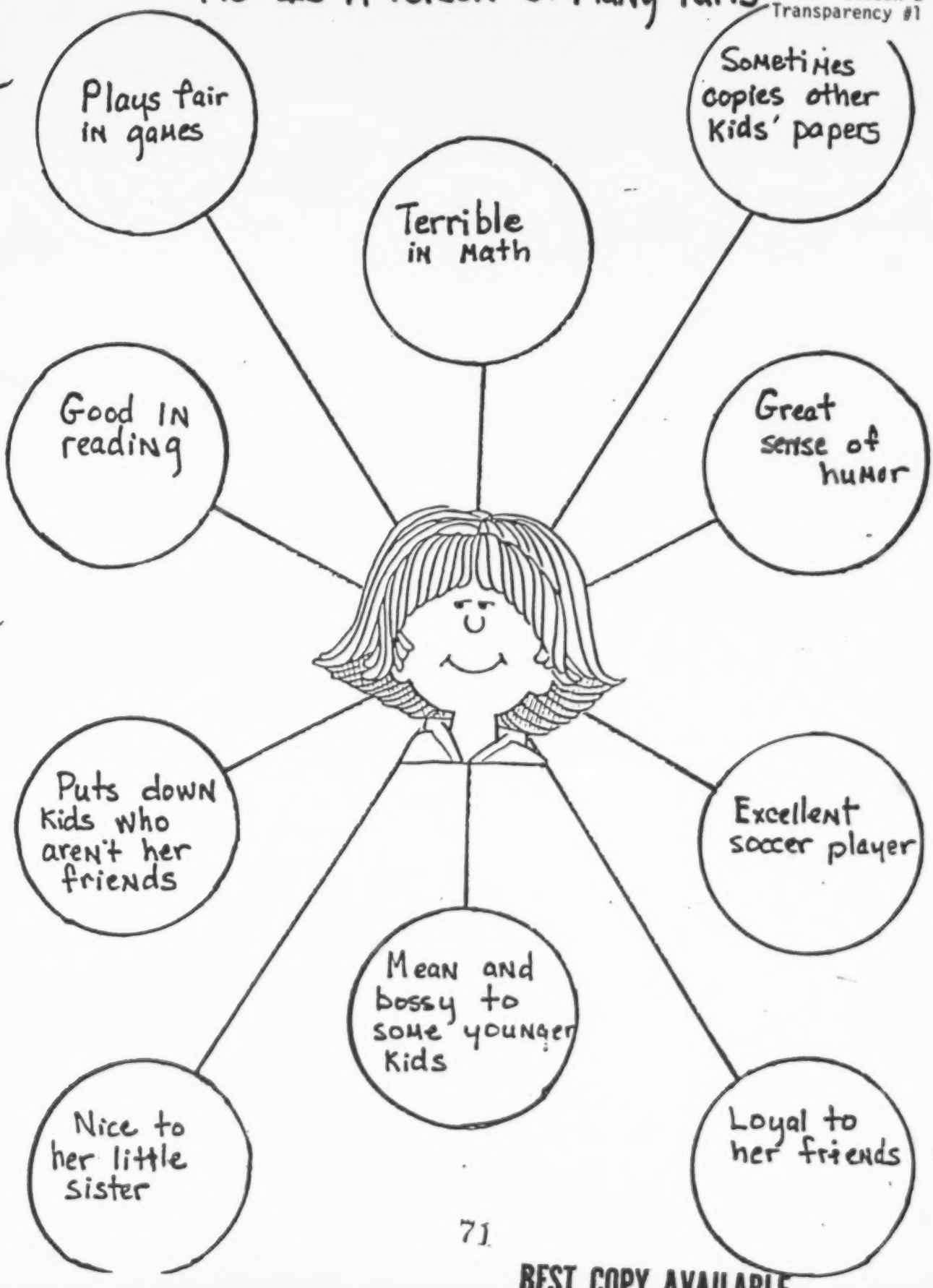
PREVIEW — The teacher will use two hypothetical students to demonstrate that people are not simple but complex. As a group, students will assign characteristics to a third hypothetical person. They will discuss the value of being aware of their many parts and of focusing on their strengths rather than their weaknesses. They will complete pages in their I'm One-Of-a-Kind workbook that require them to identify and express their positive characteristics.

MATERIALS — Transparency #1, "Flo Is a Person Of Many Parts"; Transparency #2, "Harvey Is a Person Of Many Parts"; Transparency #3, "You Are a Person Of Many Parts"; Student Workbook, I Am One-Of-a-Kind, Part II, "Things I Am Proud Of".

TO THE TEACHER — Feelings of being inadequate or inferior are among the most pervasive and destructive human emotions. More times than not, both children and adults fail to view themselves as complex persons with hundreds of different characteristics and traits. Many people engage in this "All-or-Nothing" thinking. They evaluate their personal qualities in extreme black or white categories. For instance, they see themselves as either "smart or dumb" not realizing the complexity of intelligence. A look at an intelligence test profile demonstrates that there are many dimensions of intelligence and people can score high on some sub-scales and low on others. No one is absolutely brilliant or totally stupid. Similarly, no one is either completely attractive or totally ugly.

Flo Is A Person Of Many Parts

Unit A-Lesson 2
Transparency #1


Plays fair in games
Terrible in Math
Sometimes copies other kids' papers
Good in reading
Great sense of humor
Puts down kids who aren't her friends
Excellent soccer player
Mean and bossy to some younger kids
Nice to her little sister
Loyal to her friends

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THE ASSIST PROGRAM

Affective Skills Sequentially Introduced and Systematically Taught

ASSIST is an affective education program designed to increase students' growth in the critical areas of self concept and interpersonal relationships. Numerous studies indicate that students' personal/social adjustment in the classroom has a direct bearing on academic performance.

The ASSIST curriculum is the result of an extensive review of child development theory and the research regarding existing social/emotional development programs. ASSIST incorporates concepts and procedures from social learning theory and from behavioristic and humanistic psychology. The curriculum involves students in a series of cognitively oriented lessons and experiential activities.

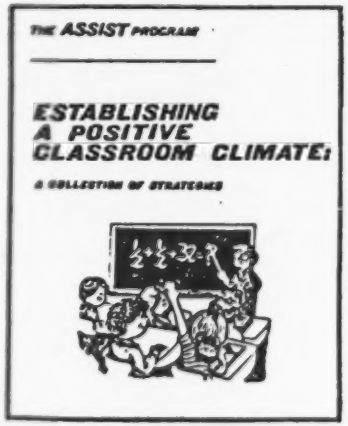
ASSIST was developed with Title IV - C innovative education funds. It has been piloted in second through sixth grade classrooms in four school districts. Statistically significant gains in self concept and social skills occurred in eight out of nine assessments. As a result, ASSIST has been state validated, designated cost effective, and exportable, and is now in the"Bank of Proven Practices" in Washington State. This bank is a clearinghouse for quality programs that are of interest of educators.

The ASSIST curriculum can be incorporated into an existing social studies, health, or language arts program or it can stand alone as a curriculum for personal growth and interpersonal relations.

The ASSIST lessons include: 1) a "To the Teacher" section which provides a theoretical background for lesson concepts; 2) a "scripted" lesson in which everything is included that needs to be said to teach lesson concepts and skills; 3) a series of transparency masters and student worksheets; 4) a variety of supplementary activities, many of which relate to basic subject areas and which provide opportunities for integration of lesson concepts.

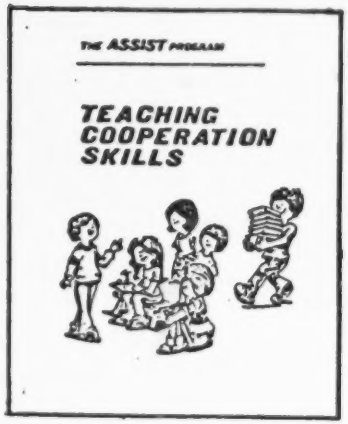
Original ASSIST Manuals

A series of sequential lessons and activities designed to promote self awareness and self regard. Students learn to use the technique of positive inner speach to build self-esteem and to cope effectively with mistakes and putdowns. Included in the manual is a "I'm One-of-a-Kind" workbook for both primary and intermediate students. (230 pages)



A collection of strategies designed to promote mutual respect, trust, and support in the classroom. Included are get acquainted activities, classroom management procedures, behavior improvement strategies, a relaxation training program, and hundreds of activities and ideas for building a cohesive classroom community. (286 pages)

New Editions To The Series



A series of lessons and experiential activities designed to enable students to work cooperatively both in pairs and in small groups on academic tasks. Lessons focus on the skills of self-management, leadership, problem-solving, and conflict resolution. Students learn and apply these skills through a wide variety of academically oriented activities. (272 pages)

The lessons in this manual bring the fundamental issues of friendship to students' awareness. Students are provided with structured opportunities to learn and practice friendship skills and integrate these skills into their daily lives. Each lesson includes a wide variety of student activities and worksheets. (252 pages)

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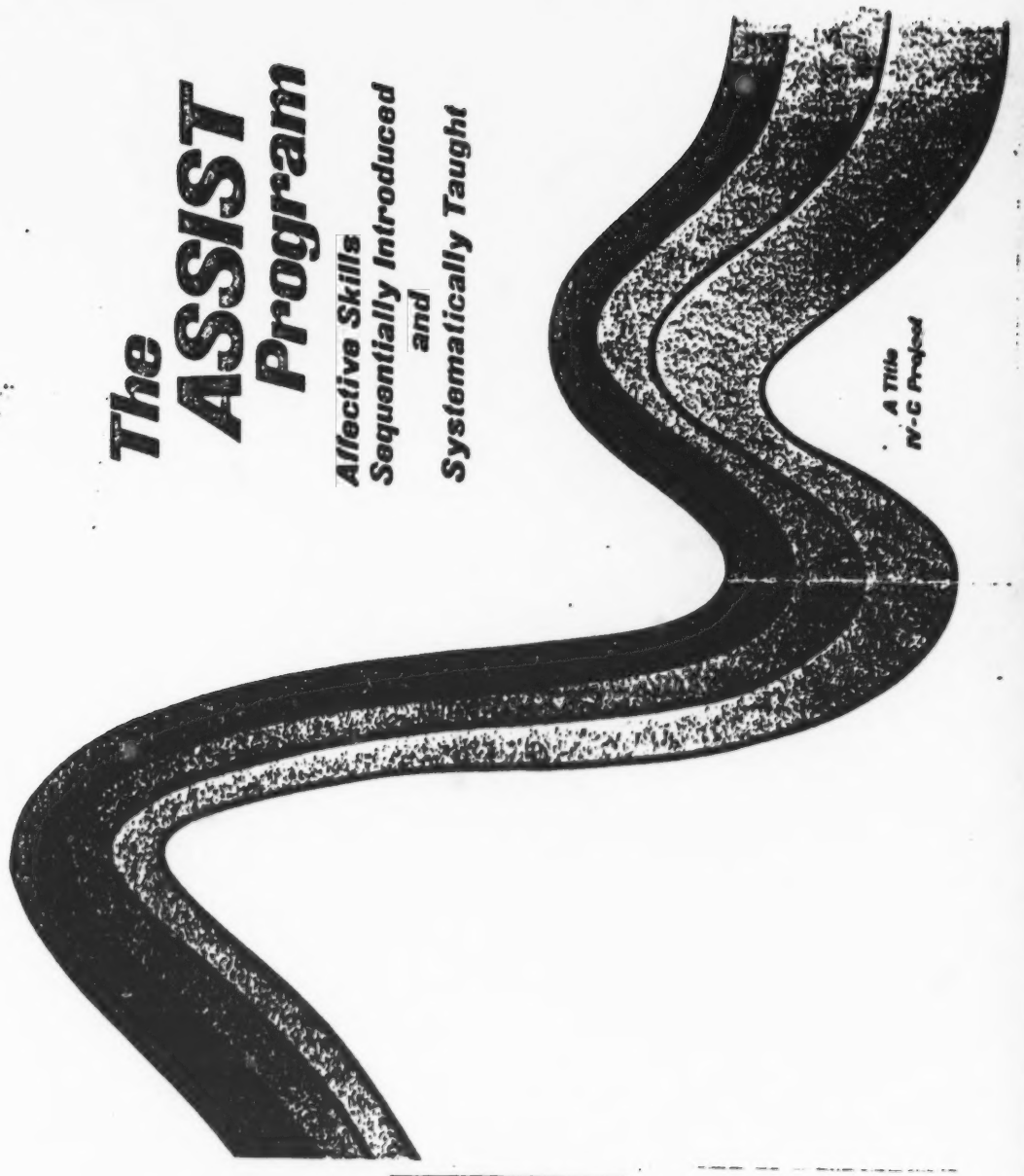

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A third source of activities for students up to the high school years is by Canfield and Wells. The flavor of their valuable book, 100 Ways to Enhance Self-Concept in the Classroom can best be conveyed by a quote from the introduction and a few samples. They affirm that:

> In any potential learning situation, the student is asked to take a risk: to write a paper that will be evaluated, to make a recitation which may be laughed at, to do board work that may be wrong, to create an object of art that might be judged. . . At a deeper level the student is risking his or her self-concept.
>
> This is the "poker chip theory of learning," which reveals the need to build up one's supply of poker chips in order "to have a surplus of chips to risk" (Canfield and Wells 1976:7).

Another way of expressing this is to create an environment where students feel "free to fail," but not to withdraw. On a recent TV interview the President of 3M Corporation attributed the creativity of the 3M research program to the firm's encouragement of risk-taking and an environment where researchers feel free to make mistakes (PBS 1985).

The chapter titles such as "Building an Environment of Positive Support," which encourages the use of journals, autobiographical exercises, discussions of self-images and self-perceptions; or "Where Am I Going?" which encourages wish lists and building ideal models of self, are illustrated with detailed suggestions. For example, exercise number 85, "The Ideal Model," suggests exercises for 1) Recognizing False Models, 2) Disidentifying from the False Models, 3) Choosing an Ideal Model, and 4) Identifying with the Ideal Model: The "As-If" Techniques.

In the first step the students are invited to think of ways that they "put themselves down" or underrate themselves and to write them down (10 to

15 minutes). Then they are asked to visualize some of the ways "you would like to appear to others (i.e., cool, romantic, carefree, tough guy, good girl, etc.) or the ways you imagine other people would want you to be" (op. cit.: 183).

As another example, in chapter seven called "Relationships with Others," there is a series of exercises called "Friends." They involve asking students to draw a picture of a friend and underneath to write a paragraph that begins with, "a friend is. . ." (op. cit.:221).

Students should be encouraged to think up interesting exercise themselves. One student introduced an activity called "Car Wash." Students were lined up in two parallel lines close together. One student at the time is sent between the lines and "everyone touches him or her and says words of praise and affection and encouragement." This should produce a shiny and happy product. The authors note that this is usually practical with only one or two people at a session. "What a strange machine man is! You fill him with bread, wine, fish, and radishes, and out of him comes sighs, laughter, and dreams" (Nikos Kazantzakis, Zorba the Greek, cited in Canfield and Wells 1976:223).

As a means of helping people get in touch with their bodies -- accept their physical selves -- the authors offer a whole chapter of activities including the use of mirrors, photographs and drawings. One simple exercise is "statues." Here students are asked to choose partners. A's job is to mold B into a statue that expresses how A is feeling. Then B describes how he or she imagines A is feeling. After sharing results, the two reverse roles and repeat the process (op. cit.:151).

These examples can get teachers and students in high schools started in developing their own creative methods of exploring self-perceptions -- clarifying self-concepts and enhancing self-esteem. Throughout the year journals can be kept and shared as an additional means of communication between teacher and student. The authors suggest that, "It is the cumulative effect over a long period of time that makes the journal effective. As it evolves into a very complete book about the student, it will become a precious document" (op. cit.:22).

For migrant students this journal can become a means of creating continuity between experiences at different schools. The student should be encouraged to use it along with other student records as an introduction to teachers at a new location.

These examples are only indicators of how teachers can gain from study of books of exercises related to self-perception development in the classroom. Such books are readily obtainable and are generally available through curriculum resource centers. One major center for information on migrant education is: ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools, Department 10, Box 3AP, Las Cruces, New Mexico 88003.

VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This manual has attempted to offer an understanding of the notion of self-perceptions (self-concept and self-esteem), a rationale for particular types of activities for enhancing self-perceptions, and finally, some examples of such activities, methods and techniques. Sources of additional curriculum materials were listed. With the correct understanding of self-perception enhancement, educators' own creativity in developing methods and curriculum should come into play.

What has seemed most important to emphasize in this effort is the correct understanding of the causes of the migrant situation, and the correct attitudes toward self-perception enhancement which stem from the analysis of causes of problems. We have not attempted to analyze in detail the underlying reasons why U.S. educational systems up to now have largely failed to meet migrant children's needs, to transform their conditions, or to help them achieve greater success and self-esteem.

The logic of our analysis, however, has lead us to conclude that many of the conditions which lead to low average achievement in school and to poor self-perceptions as learners are beyond the control of educators. Educators are thus trapped in a painful pincer, one side of which is the expections of the general public, the other is educators' lack of control over the causes of school failure and of negative self-perceptions in migrant students. The public wants schools to produce healthy, happy and highly motivated students who are creative high achievers, yet U.S. society and the economy are producing children, twenty-five percent of whom according to the latest statistics are living in families below the

poverty level. For migrant children the percentage is closer to ninety. We must ask ourselves if anything of significance can be achieved in such circumstances? What can we do, when we know that the single most important predictor of school dropout is the degree of family poverty?

The dean of the Peabody College for Teachers at Vanderbilt University eloquently states the case:

> In the criticisms of American education that we are hearing and in the prescriptions for reform being made by prestigious panels, almost nothing is being said about the most significant factor associated with low student achievement--poverty--nor have we heard of the most promising solutions.

In such a situation,

> We should not expect the changes advocated by such estimable Groups as the National Commission on Excellence in Education to amount to much, at least for many of the nation's young people. In recent years we have increased educational opportunities as a way to end poverty; now, wiser, we should try to end poverty in order to improve the quality of education (Hawley 1983:24).

But, again, it is not within the capacity of the schools to end poverty. That should be clear by now to those who have listened to politicians and pundits refusing to examine seriously the economic system and subtly shifting the blame to schools by their hypocritical praise heaped upon education as the "ladder out of the ghetto." Our question to them must be: If we help all the migrants to get out of the fields, who will harvest the crops? It should be clear to anyone that the way to improve the economic lot of migrant workers is to improve their income and living conditions through legislation to force growers to provide decent housing, pay and working conditions, or by supporting unions which will obtain these things for their members through collective bargaining.

Educators, of course, cannot wait for such reforms to take place before they enter the classrooms. They must teach migrants today. Therefore, they must "do their best with what they've got." Doing their best, however, could include the following:

1. Keeping always in mind the social and cultural genesis of student problems and refusing to "blame the victim." It is always tempting to revert to an "individualistic" explanation for failure such as "anyone who wants to work can succeed." Anyone who observes the labors of migrant workers can put the lie to that statement. It is obvious that a society can't produce high success and high self-esteem by producing poverty and there will be poverty as long as people are paid $7,700 for a full-time, year-round job (the minimum wage which is below the poverty level), or in the case of migrants, even less.

2. Helping migrant students and parents agitate for social reforms and for all the compensatory help they can get, while recognizing that hand-outs and compensatory bandaids are just that--bandaids--that do not get to the causes of the wounds, and, in some cases, help perpetuate the problem by creating dependence on charity.

3. Studying ways to transform the schools to adapt them to the needs of the student as well as helping students adapt to the schools. Listening to migrant students and parents and working <u>with</u> them to achieve solutions to problems is the way to go. And this means giving them more power to make decisions or at least to participate in policy-making.

4. U.S. educators owe it to themselves and their students to discover the signal achievements of certain other nations who in just the last two decades have eliminated the ghettos and the lower levels of poverty. The most salient of these are Sweden, Austria and Japan. At the same time these same countries, particularly Sweden and Japan, have created enviable educational systems and extremely high scholastic achievement. Though certain communist nations such as Chechoslovakia, China and the Soviet Union have also made great strides toward economic equality and in educational achievement, the totalitarian aspects of these societies make them much less appealing than the previously-mentioned nations whose prosperity and equality, coupled with democratic freedoms, make them models which any intelligent person should want to study.

5. Finally, educators should keep in mind that the best ways to enhance self-perceptions are those ways which allow for real success in meaningful activities--this means activities which are valued by significant others. Teachers must continually strive for this, and not just rely on simplistic techniques such as telling people "they're O.K.," verbally "affirming their worth as persons," etc. Real affirmation of a person's worth must occur in actions as well as words. Perhaps the most significant programs for enhancing migrant self-esteem, in the conditions in which we now live, will be those which lead to immediate remuneration--learn and earn programs--for these will help break down what is the most obvious and concrete barrier to migrant student self-esteem, the experience of being on the margin of the economically affluent and secure world, the experience of growing up in a family whose material and cultural failure is affirmed by the mainstream culture at every turn. And, yet, we must admit that as long as fruit-pickers can earn only a below-poverty wage, and there are no other jobs available, schools will have limited success in educating the children of fruit-pickers, or in enhancing their self-concept and self-esteem.

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